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STUDENT ESSAY

MORALE - THE TENTH PRINCIPLE OF WAR?

by

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Colonel Vaughn's paper examines morale at the individual, unit, army, and national levels and concludes that it merits designation as the tenth principle of war. He builds a systematic, well organized case to make his point in a very convincing manner. His research was broad, but well focused on the subject. He skillfully blended quotes from Clausewitz to Kissinger to build the case that morale/national will/public support should be elevated

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in our awareness by making it a principle of war. Very effective use is made of the Vietnam experience, and the reader is left with the impression that future crises will be better dealt with if our strategists approach them with an appreciation of the influence public support (or lack of it) has on the options available to the decisionmakers. This paper makes a significant contribution to an important subject.

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MORALE - THE TENTH PRINCIPLE OF WAR?

Lieutenant Colonel (P) Thomas B. Vaughn

United States Army War College

Class of 1982

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INTRODUCTION

"If you wish to converse with me," wrote Voltaire, "define your terms." That is sound advice for any discourse; essential for the treatment of such a lofty topic as morale and the principles of war.

Indeed, the topic suggests an array of questions. What is the nature of war? Is it a failure of diplomacy or an extension of policy? Is it a science, an art, both, neither? Is war an outmoded concept in this era of superpowers bristling with nuclear weapons arsenals theoretically capable of destroying civilization?

These are complex questions with both philosophical and practical dimensions. The first three have been raised and debated for centuries. The last one is relatively new, but even more mind-boggling in its implications. None of these questions will be answered definitively in this essay. They are, however, considered as a backdrop for the pursuit of understanding.

This essay focuses on a different, but in my judgment, important, set of questions. What is morale? What are the principles of war - more importantly, what are they <u>for</u>? Answers to these questions, however tentative, should shed new light on the topic. Such answers may even suggest new and more useful relationships between strategy and the principles of war.

More to the point, this essay seeks to do three things. First, to analyze morale at various levels; second, to examine the linkage between national morale and military morale; and finally, to determine whether morale needs to be added to our currently accepted Principles of War.

MORALE

What is morale? Surely, it is a term which, like leadership, is bandied about as if its meaning were clear to all. Yet, the very usage of the term in the workaday world suggests otherwise. The glib "how's your morale today?" and the often equally glib reply obviously do not connote the essence of the term. Nor do more somber references to morale as individual mood capture its full significance.

Morale, as defined in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, is "the mental and emotional condition (as of enthusiasm, confidence, or loyalty) of an individual or group with regard to the function or tasks at hand . . . a sense of common purpose with respect to a group: esprit de corps . . . the level of individual psychological well-being based on such factors as a sense of purpose and confidence in the future."[1] Assuredly, morale partakes of all of these notions. Moreover, it exists at various levels of consciousness in individuals and groups.

This essay examines morale from four levels: individual, unit, army, and nation. As with any analysis of

human phenomena, these distinctions are useful only to the extent that they contribute to a better understanding of morale in its various manifestations. Nevertheless, they are, in my judgment, necessary to the conduct of serious inquiry.

INDIVIDUAL MORALE

Individual morale relates to the way a particular person views the world and his role in it. Values and expectations are internalized through a complex process of socialization that occurs over time, notably in the first two decades of life. From infancy through adolescence to adulthood we learn (or fail to learn) those patterns of behavior that are acceptable or unacceptable, that are rewarded or punished. Thus, when a young person takes the oath of enlistment or commissioning and begins the transition from civilian to soldier, he brings with him certain values and expectations which have been developed over the years by family, peers, school, church, and other individuals, groups, and institutions with whom he has interacted.

Traditionally, basic training has served well to re-socialize the raw recruit, that is to reorient his values and expectations along lines supportive of the military milieu. Hardship, discipline, military proficiency, physical fitness, and teamwork are traditional soldierly values to which he is expected to aspire. Deviations from these norms carry the promise of censure or worse.

UNIT MORALE

Basic training also introduces the new soldier to the concept and the reality of unit morale. If he has participated in athletics or other forms of group endeavor and competition, his transition is more likely to be a smooth one. After all, physical training, marksmanship, and individual military proficiency training and testing differ only in degree from these previous contests of body, mind, and will. A healthy atmosphere of competition, pitting platoon against platoon, builds not only competence and teamwork, it builds esprit as well. One has only to observe, or better, to experience a physical training test, record firing exercise, or individual proficiency training test to be convinced of this. Shared values and expectations are writ large on the faces of soldiers who strive for excellence in these major training events.

While individual and unit morale remain important factors in advanced individual training, they assume even greater importance once the soldier joins his permanent unit. How he is received, oriented, and integrated into his new unit will affect to a considerable extent how well he adapts to his new environment. Properly challenged, motivated, and cared for, he is likely to become a good soldier and valued member of the team. Improperly treated at this critical juncture, he is likely to become frustrated. Left unattended to, this frustration will inevitably

detract from his morale, his conduct, and his performance. The implications for unit morale over time are dire. As Clausewitz argues, "moral elements are among the most important in war . . . They are: the skill of the commander, the experience and courage of the troops, and their patriotic spirit."[2] As leaders, we are especially charged with the duty to see that the moral elements so important in war are inculcated in ourselves, our soldiers, and our units in peace.

ARMY MORALE

Army morale is an abstraction that approaches reality only in terms of its constituent parts. It is not high just because the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army say it is. Nor is it low because some disgruntled soldier or posturing politician asserts that it is. To the contrary, like the proverbial structure, if its foundations are sound, the Army's morale is too. If, however, they are weak, the implications for Army morale are ominous.

What are these foundations? Leaders, soldiers, and units are surely the vital pillars, for it is in their general tendencies that we must look for an assessment of Army morale. We must, however, look beyond the Army as well. To paraphrase Samuel Huntington, military explanations do not fully explain military phenomena.[3] This is especially true with regard to morale.

MORALE AS A FUNCTION OF LEADERSHIP

A study of history indicates graphically that morale is a function of leadership. In short, good leaders create and sustain spirited units. This truism transcends the ages. Julius Caesar understood it perfectly. As Lynn Montross points out, "For if Alexander was the greatest conqueror of antiquity, and Hannibal the most able tactician, Caesar merits recognition as a superlative leader of men. His competence rested upon that close, reciprocal contact between commander and troops which has always been as important as material assets."[4]

And what was the nature of this relationship between Caesar and his men? Again, the words of Montross:

> The soldiers who followed him in Gaul did not serve a vague concept of patriotism. They were bound by emotional ties to the personality of the slim, elegant patrician at their head. This union of commander and troops was sometimes affectionate, sometimes stormy, always warm and intimate . . . They fought, suffered, and died for the pride of the legion and the personality of its leader.[5]

All the Great Captains of military history, ancient and modern, have in various ways recognized and dealt with the core issue of morale as a function of leadership. From the prescient reforms of Sweden's Gustavus Adolphus to the more draconian measures of England's Oliver Cromwell and the enlightened initiatives of France's Louvois and Napoleon, to the iron discipline of Prussia's Frederick the Great; from the nadir of our own George

Washington at Valley Forge to the zenith at Yorktown, morale has been an integral factor in the calculus of warfare.

Morale as a function of leadership also loomed large in the American Civil War. Both Grant and Lee understood the bond that must exist between the leaders and the led if battles and campaigns and ultimately, wars are to be won. Ironically, it was Lee, the loser of that great war who was to emerge the lasting hero in the pantheon of heroes, this despite Grant's victory over the South and his later ascendency to the White House. Indeed, the devotion of General Lee to his men and they to him appears, in retrospect, almost mystical. As Lynn Montross observes, Lee "supplied a moral leadership which the austere (Jefferson) Davis could never offer. Men who had lost faith in the Confederacy could still find a cause in the greathearted humanity of Robert E. Lee. He repaid their devotion with an unfaltering courage."[6]

Matters of morale were clearly in the forefront of General John J. Pershing's mind when he pondered whether to release units from the American Expeditionary Force to assist the Allies following Allied reverses in World War I. Just as clearly, Foch considered morale when "despite the urgency Foch wisely kept them in reserve until late in May."[7]

That the relatively inexperienced Americans distinguished themselves at Cantigny, at Chateau-Thierry, and on the Marne attests to the wisdom of both Pershing and Foch in preparing

them for battle before they were actually committed.

Later, when General Pershing had brought his expeditionary force to maturity, he insisted on fighting it intact as opposed to dispersing it under French and British command. Although this shocked the French generals, it endeared Pershing to his countrymen. General Pershing's unbridled faith in himself and in his American soldiers was more than vindicated at St. Mihiel where the American "attack caught the enemy in the act of withdrawing; and during a two-day attack the American forces closed on 15,000 prisoners and 450 guns. At a cost of 7,000 casualties, the success ranks as one of the most thrifty of the war."[8] Two weeks later, the Americans under Pershing launched the Meuse-Argonne Campaign. Shortly thereafter Germany began to disintegrate. On November 11, 1918, the battlefields fell silent.

Morale took on new dimensions during World War II. Although the American people were galvanized into action by the attack on Pearl Harbor, the fact remained that we were ill-prepared for war despite our declaration of it. That we survived the dark days and months of 1941 and 1942 and ultimately prevailed over the Axis Powers is a testimonial to our ability to harness the elements of national power in the pursuit of coalition warfare. But more than that, it is a tribute to the leadership of Roosevelt and Truman, of Marshall and MacArthur, of Eisenhower and Patton, all of whom recognized morale as a

function of leadership.

The extent to which our leaders in World War II recognized the criticality of morale war is attested to not only by their actions but by their writings as well. As Franklin D. Roosevelt reminded the nation, "We are in the war, we are all in it - - every single man, woman and child is a partner in the most tremendous undertaking of our American history."[9] His words were echoed by his brilliant and selfless Chief of Staff, General George C. Marshall:

> The soldier's heart, the soldier's spirit, the soldier's soul, are everything. Unless the soldier's soul sustains him he cannot be relied on and will fail himself and his commander and his country in the end.[10]

And Marshall again, "It is not enough to fight. It is the spirit which we bring to the fight that decides the issue. It is <u>morale</u> that wins the victory."[11]

The quintessence of morale in war was captured eloquently by General George S. Patton, Jr. who wrote, "Wars may be fought with weapons but they are won by men. It is the spirit of men who follow and of the man who leads that gains the victory."[12]

Clearly, then, morale as a function of leadership is a concept proven beyond doubt. Not so clear, however, are other factors that affect or are affected by morale.

OTHER ELEMENTS RELATED TO MORALE

Since World War II, a number of studies have examined the relationship between combat behavior and motivation. Among the most notable examples of these are The American Soldier and Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II. The former singled out "five major elements which seem to have made the majority of soldiers able to stand the terrific stress of battle: coercive authority, personal leadership, social relations with the primary group, convictions about the war, and finally, certain more individual elements like prayer and personal philosophies."[13] The latter study keyed on the "primary group" - - that is to say, the interpersonal relationships with the squad, platoon, and company - - as a more useful area for explaining the individual German infantryman's attitude, conduct, and performance in combat.[14]

Other important contributions to the literature of soldier morale and combat performance have been made by Roger W. Little[15] and Charles Moskos. The former focused on "buddy relations and combat performance," concluding that buddy relations by and large reinforced organizational values, goals, and objectives, thereby contributing to unit effectiveness.[16] On the other hand, Moskos concluded that primary group relationships among soldiers in Vietnam were more individualistic and self-centered than those ascribed to World War II soldiers or even those of the

Korean War. He also asserts that certain personnel policies, notably the one-year tour and individual rotation policies enhanced individual soldier morale, but detracted from unit cohesion.[17]

Less scholarly, but more sensational (hence, more widely read) are the writings of Richard A. Gabriel and Paul L. Savage which conclude that the ills of the Army, apparently judged to be terminal in the absence of major reforms, can be traced directly to the quality and style of recent American military leadership.[18]

The scholarly efforts of Stoeffer, Shils, Janowitz, Little, Moskos, and others reinforce the intuitive notions about the importance of morale in war held by leaders for centuries. Moreover, they are valuable contributions to our greater understanding of morale precisely because they underscore various dimensions of the problem, both internal and external, that might otherwise escape our attention. Despite their differences in terms of population examined, techniques used, and conclusions reached, each sheds some light (and in the case of Gabriel and Savage, more than a little heat) on important aspects of morale in war. Finally, they all demonstrate that morale is not something to be treated as "given" in the equation of warfare.

NATIONAL MORALE

So far, I have shown that morale is a function of leadership and of other important factors, both internal

and external to the Army. But morale is more than this. In a democracy such as ours, morale is also a function of national consensus. This is not to suggest unanimity of public opinion on the part of two hundred million Americans on each and every public issue. It is, however, to suggest general agreement on such fundamental issues of public policy as war and peace.

Fortunately for the Nation, this gaining of consensus has been institutionalized in American government and society over time. The seeds were sown during our early colonial and revolutionary experiences. They continue to be reaped. Indeed, from our Declaration of Independence, through the short-lived Articles of Confederation, to the enduring Constitution and beyond, we have a rich heritage of law, custom, tradition, and usage, all in support of government by consent.

Representative democracy is perhaps the most perfect embodiment of the values we profess. What are these values? Surely, they include justice, freedom, and individual dignity. They also include individual responsibility and commitment.[19] It is among these enduring values that we can begin to see the importance of the linkage of individual, unit, Army, and national morale. For example, justice, freedom, and individual dignity are human rights that most contemporary Americans take for granted. Yet, the historically indisputable fact is that those rights have been protected over the years by generations of

Americans who recognized their individual responsibility and commitment to their country. Historically, this responsibility and commitment included the duty to bear arms in the service of one's country. As George Washington argued, "It may be laid down as a primary position, and the basis of our system, that every citizen who enjoys the protection of a free Government, owes not only a proportion of his property, but even of his personal services to the defense of it."[20] Washington also went to great lengths to emphasize what he called the "mutual dependence" of the Army and the Country, asserting that "their several duties should be so regulated and enforced as to produce not only the greatest harmony and good understanding but the truest happiness and comfort to each."[21]

THE ARMY AND THE NATION

In practice, our history of civil-military relations has fallen somewhat short of the ideal stressed by George Washington. Indeed, there is a definite "love-hate" pattern evident. Given our colonial and revolutionary heritage, this should not surprise us. While it is true that our Army played a pivotal role in wresting our independence from the British, it is also true that many of our founding fathers, most notably Thomas Jefferson, were viscerally opposed to the notion of large standing armies, American as well as British.

This love-hate relationship has surfaced repeatedly over the years. In time of crisis Americans have traditionally closed ranks and supported our Army. Soldiers, rich and poor, conscript and volunteer, have served our Army and our Nation well, some with singular distinction.

In time of peace, however, the American Army has traditionally been swept from the mainstream of American life to the backwaters of the national consciousness and conscience. For many, if not most Americans, this is the natural order of things. War is an aberration; peace is the norm. In time of war, service and sacrifice are necessary. In time of peace, they are for some still necessary, but for most, a nuisance.

Thus, throughout most of our history as a nation we have turned to the Army in war and away from it in peace. In the Vietnam War this pattern was flawed, perhaps fatally, in terms of the war's outcome. Why? Numerous reasons have been cited; the debate continues. An exegesis of the arguments, pro and con, regarding our role in the Vietnam War is beyond the scope of this essay. Nevertheless, I would argue that many of our strategic wounds were self-inflicted, that they stemmed in part from our failure to apply time-honored principles of war to the Vietnam situation. Also, I would argue that our efforts were stymied and ultimately thwarted by our failure to grasp the significance of morale in the sense I have thus far described and analyzed it.

Some would suggest that this is a "red herring" argument; that the real issues of the Vietnam War lie elsewhere. I disagree. I will, of course, concede that these aren't the only issues. They are just the ones I have chosen to focus on.

THE PRINCIPLES OF WAR

Like morale, the principles of war have been widely referred to as if they were a set of immutable rules legitimized by the ages and now commonly ascribed to. I was first exposed to these "immutable" principles when I was a student in the Armor Advanced Non-commissioned Officers Course at Fort Knox, Kentucky in 1958. I recall very well the instructor solemnly intoning "Mass, Unity of Command, Surprise, Security, Maneuver, Objective, Offensive, Simplicity, and Economy of Force." After stating each principle, the instructor would point with precision to his visual training aid which displayed that particular principle in large block letters for all to see and presumably to copy down. The instructor closed on a helpful note by saying, "Gentlemen, these are the principles of war, the key word is MUSSMOOSE. You will see them again!"

Indeed, we did see the principles of war again in the course, though never, as I recall, at any level of sophistication above re-stating them on paper for various examinations. I cite this anecdote merely to illustrate the absolutist, yet cursory treatment given the principles.

I was to see these same principles many times again over the course of more than two decades of service. The acronym MUSSMOOSE re-surfaced at the Infantry School during OCS and again in the Advanced Course. It was even there to greet me in the hallowed halls of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. It was, in short, not only immutable, but ubiquitous as well!

Despite recurrent exposure to the principles of war, I retained a certain degree of skepticism about them. In a sense (no irreverence intended), they were analogous to the Ten Commandments: widely known, but not so widely followed. It may, of course, be argued that they were, indeed, followed to a great extent in World War II and to some extent in the Korean War. I concede the point.

On the other hand, it seems to me that we either forgot or chose to ignore the principles of war in Vietnam. For example, the strategic principle of The Objective was seriously violated. According to Professor Hugh M. Arnold, there were some twenty-two different U.S. rationales cited as official justifications for our involvement in Indochina from 1949 through 1967.[22] As Harry Summers suggests, "They can be grouped into three major categories: from 1949 until about 1962, emphasis was on resisting Communist aggression; from 1962 until about 1968, . . . on counterinsurgency; after 1968 preserving the integrity of American commitments was the main emphasis."[23]

In sharp contrast to our diffusion of objectives, the North Vietnamese were remarkably consistent. As John Collins observes, "Enemy strategy can be outlined quickly, since it was simple, concise and consistent . . . the opposition knew what they wanted to do . . . Controlling and communizing all of Indochina have always been the foe's overriding objectives."[24]

Not surprisingly, U.S. confusion over strategic objectives created severe problems for us at home and abroad. According to Douglas Kinnard, "almost 70 percent of the Army generals who managed the war were uncertain of its objectives."[25] If true (and I have no reason to doubt it), this is, indeed, a sad commentary. It reflects, as Kinnard asserts, "a deep-seated strategic failure: the inability of policy-makers to form tangible, obtainable goals."[26]

Given the confusion among policy-makers and policy executors, it is small wonder that the American people became more and more confused and disenchanted as the war dragged on. Again, as Harry Summers points out, "Our loss of focus on The Objective was particularly damaging, since this is the driving principle of war."[27] He goes on to say that , "This loss of focus also exacerbated a common American failing - - the tendency to see war as something separate and apart from the political process. World Wars I and II had been not so much wars as crusades to punish evil."[28]

Failure to focus on The Objective also severely hampered our application of the other principles of war. Our putative shortcomings in The Offensive, Mass, Economy of Force, Maneuver, Unity of Command, Security, Surprise, and Simplicity are documented in detail by Harry Summers in On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context.[29] Whether one agrees with Summers' interpretations of where, how, and why we went awry in Vietnam is not nearly as important as whether his controversial book causes us to pause and reflect on our role as military professionals in a democratic society. As professionals, we have a high duty to be as expert as possible in our profession. Moreover, we have a duty to convey that expertise to our military and civilian superiors. As General Dewitt C. Smith suggests in his Foreword to Summers' book, "we are all responsible and must play courageous and responsible roles in devising national strategy, carrying it out, accepting responsibility for it, and turning yesterday's mistakes into better preparation for tomorrow."[30]

MORALE AND THE VIETNAM WAR

Surely, one of the most lamentable of "yesterday's mistakes" was our failure to anticipate the pivotal role that morale would come to play in the Vietnam War. We should have known better. The lessons of history were there for us to see. They were written in blood by statesmen and soldiers through the ages. They were as ancient as Gideon,

victor over the Midianites, circa 1200 B.C., they were as modern as our own victory in World War II. There was much to be learned about morale in war from our experiences in Korea. There was much more to be learned from the French experience in the Indo-China War.

Incredibly, critical decisions leading to our intervention in Vietnam were based, not upon the lessons of some thirty centuries of the "grand canvas of warfare," but instead upon the shaky pillars of "limited war" and "systems analysis."[31]

Conceptually, limited war with respect to Vietnam was, in Pentagonese, a "plausible option." It failed in operation on several counts. First, it seems to me, it failed for lack of a clear-cut national strategy and a concomitant military strategy. Secondly, it failed from a lack of understanding of the enemy; a naively ethnocentric under-estimation of his cunning and resolve. Finally, it failed from our own lack of resolve.

Conceptually, too, systems analysis could be a useful tool in the Vietnam War. After all, "information is power" and Americans were the world's experts in gathering and processing information. Just how inexpert we as military professionals seemed to be in the eyes of some is reflected in the comments of Alain C. Enthoven and Wayne K. Smith, two leading systems analysts and co-authors of <u>How Much Is Enough: Shaping the Defense Program 1961-1969</u>:

> What is commonly called "military science" is not scientific in the same sense as law or medicine or engineering. It encompasses no agreed-upon body of knowledge, no prescribed curriculum, no universally recognized principles that one must master to qualify as a military professional. (The so-called "principles of war" are really a set of platitudes that can be twisted to suit almost any situation.) . . . The point is that military professionalism is largely in the conduct of military operations, not in the analysis and design of broad strategies.[32]

This argument against military science and for systems analysis, logically extended, suggests that the latter is vastly superior to the former and ought to be adopted in the pursuit of truth. The argument is, in my judgment, fallacious on two counts. First, while "figures don't lie," it is quite possible for "liars to figure." Systems analysis can be and has been misused. Secondly, and to my mind, more importantly, the systems analysis mind-set carries with it a subtle, but infinitely dangerous assumption: that if it can't be measured, it can't be that important. The fallacy of this reasoning is as clear to me as it was to Henry Kissinger. He stated that "there was a truth which senior military officers had learned in a lifetime of service that did not lend itself to formal articulation: that power has a psychological and not only a technical component. Men can be led by statistics only up to a certain point and then more fundamental values predominate."[33] I would simply add that high among those "fundamental values" would be morale in the sense I have used it. To be fair, Kissinger also faults the military,

who, in his view, "brought on some of their own troubles. They permitted themselves to be co-opted too readily. They accommodated to the new dispensation while inwardly resenting it."[34]

As military professionals, we need to ask ourselves a rather uncomfortable question: how valid is Kissinger's point? While each of us has his own answer, the available evidence seems to indicate that we did, indeed, compromise our professional ideals to some extent. How else can we account for the fact that relatively few colonels and generals resigned in protest over concepts proven to be bankrupt? Again, Kissinger's pen is vitriolic, but revealing, "A new breed of military officer emerged: men who had learned the new jargon, who could present the systems analysis arguments so much in vogue, more articulate than the older generation and more skilled in bureaucratic maneuvering. On some levels it eased civil-military relationships; on a deeper level it deprived the policy process of the simpler, cruder, but perhaps more relevant assessments which in the final analysis are needed when issues are reduced to a test of arms."[35]

Ironically, we had an exemplary model of civil-military decision-making to guide us. It occurred during the siege of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. It is revealed in the writings of General Matthew B. Ridgway who was then the Army's Chief of Staff. Ridgway first shares his views on the proper statesman-soldier relationship:

> The statesman, the senior civilian authority, says to the soldier (and by "soldier" I mean the professional military man . . . as represented in the persons of the chiefs of staff): This is our national policy. This is what we wish to accomplish, or would like to do. What military means are required to support it?
>
> The soldier studies the problem in detail. 'Very well,' he says to the statesman. 'Here is what your policy will require in men and guns, in ships and planes.'
>
> If civilian authority finds the cost to be greater than the country can bear then either the objectives themselves should be modified, or the responsibility for the risks should be forthrightly accepted. Under no circumstances, regardless of pressures from whatever source or motive, should the professional man yield, or compromise his judgment for other than convincing military reasons. To do otherwise would be to destroy his usefulness.[36]

To his credit, General Ridgway practiced what he preached. His analysis of the Indo-China situation was masterful, his conclusions perceptive. "We could have fought in Indo-China," he said. "We could have won, if we had been willing to pay the tremendous cost in men and money that such intervention would have required - - a cost that in my opinion would have eventually been as great as, or greater than, that we paid in Korea."[37]

According to General Ridgway, once the full report was in, he immediately sent it through the chain of command to President Eisenhower who agreed with Ridgway: "the idea of intervening was abandoned, and it is my (Ridgway's) belief that the analysis . . . played a considerable, perhaps a decisive part in persuading our

government not to embark on that tragic adventure."[38]

General Ridgway's account of his report to the President is corroborated by David Halberstam:

> Thus the Ridgway report, which no one had ordered the Chief of Staff to initiate, but Ridgway felt he owed it both to the men he commanded and to the country he served. His conclusion was not that the United States should not intervene, but he outlined very specifically the heavy price required.[39]

There is scant evidence that the example of Ridgway was followed by his successors. To be fair, there is even less to indicate that Presidents Kennedy and Johnson enjoyed anything like the mutual trust and confidence that existed between President Eisenhower and General Ridgway.

What does all of this have to do with the principles of war and morale? Actually, a lot. General Ridgway was a soldier par excellence. He understood war and he understood soldiers. He loathed the former and loved the latter. Moreover, he understood to an unusual degree the impact of war on morale and vice-versa.

Subsequent events were to poignantly prove the wisdom of General Ridgway's analysis and President Eisenhower's decision not to intervene. The costs were great. Some are yet to be fully measured.

Morale, in the sense described herein, was a vital, perhaps pivotal factor in the outcome of the Vietnam War. In the early years of U.S. involvement, morale, esprit de corps,

and public support were all generally high. Public support, however, began to wane in 1967 and to nosedive in 1968 and beyond. Increasing involvement from 1965 to 1968 brought increasingly larger draft calls and higher U.S. casualties. In turn, these led to more and more antiwar demonstrations.

Tet 1968 marked the beginning of the end for substantive U.S. involvement in Vietnam. It was a gamble of gigantic proportions for the North Vietnamese. In essence, they counted heavily on winning the victory that had thus far eluded them. Assaulting on a broad front, "some 84,000 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese attacked 36 of 43 provincial capitals, 5 of 6 autonomous cities, 34 of 242 district capitals, and at least 50 hamlets. Never before had the enemy mounted such a concentrated effort."[40]

Official accounts of Tet '68 point to the horrendous casualties inflicted upon the enemy and assert, somewhat disingenuously, that "The Tet offensive thus was an apparent psychological victory for the enemy. Yet it was at the same time a military defeat."[41] While the latter was true, it became largely irrelevant. The enemy won where it counted. The Tet offensive, coming on the heels of optimistic forecasts from the Johnson Administration, shocked the American public at both mass and elite levels. Media coverage heightened the controversy. While media impact on mass public opinion was somewhat diffused, its effect at the elite level was swift and deadly.[42] Hawks turned

to doves, almost overnight. The cumulative effect on President Johnson is best expressed by his own recollections:

> So there were many unexpected elements in the Tet affair, some positive, some negative. I was prepared for the events of Tet, though the scale of the attacks and the size of the Communist force were greater than I had anticipated. I did not expect the enemy effort to have the impact on American thinking that it achieved. I was not surprised that elements of the press, the academic community, and the Congress reacted as they did. I was surprised and disappointed that the enemy's efforts produced such a dismal effect on various people inside government and others outside whom I had always regarded as staunch and unflappable. Hanoi must have been delighted; it was exactly the reaction they sought.[43]

With the events of Tet '68 excruciatingly fresh in his mind, President Johnson made the agonizing decision not to seek re-election. This decision was linked with U.S. peace offers, including a plan to scale down the bombing. The stage was set for Vietnamization, U.S. disengagement, and ultimately North Vietnamese victory.

In reviewing the factors, forces, and events that drove President Johnson from office, one is again reminded of Clausewitz' point that war is a "remarkable trinity," involving "the people; . . . the commander and his army; . . . the government."[44] It may be said that Johnson tried hard, but ultimately failed to maintain these three separate, but crucially related tendencies in balance. That such a consummate politician was unable to do so underscores the difficulty of fighting a limited war against a foe who, within his resources, is fighting a total war.

In sum, the results of Tet 1968 may be likened to those of Dien Bien Phu. Clearly, Tet 1968 cost the United States dearly in terms of public support, as did Dien Bien Phu for the French in 1954. Just as clearly, Tet 1968 signalled the demise of major U.S. involvement in Vietnam as did Dien Bien Phu for the French in Indo-China. In essence, the results were the same. Only the tempo differed. For the French, the end was swift and sure; for the United States, slow and painful. Nevertheless, in May of 1975, the North Vietnamese flag was raised over Saigon just as the Viet Minh flag had flown over Dien Bien Phu twenty-one years before. Ironically, just 55 days elapsed from the beginning of the siege of Dien Bien Phu to its capture and from the beginning of the 1975 offensive to the fall of South Vietnam.[45]

To date, the jury is out on the so-called "lessons learned" from our long and bitter Vietnam experience. Writers of various political persuasions have argued for and against our involvement. One lesson, however, seems clear: a limited war of long duration against an aggressive, determined foe who is fighting a total war incurs special problems of morale, esprit de corps and public support. As Clausewitz prophesied:

> Not every war need be fought until one side collapses. When the motives and tensions of war are slight we can imagine that the very faintest prospect of defeat might be enough to cause one side to yield. If from the very start the other side feels that this is

> probable, it will obviously concentrate on bringing about this probability rather than take the long way round and totally defeat the enemy.[46]

Whether the North Vietnamese had read these particular views of Clausewitz is known but to them. That they understood the message conveyed by Clausewitz is known to all. For the North Vietnamese the "center of gravity" was American resolve. Their center of gravity became our Achilles' heel.

MORALE AND THE PRINCIPLES OF WAR

Consensus on the real reasons for the fall of South Vietnam may never be reached. Nevertheless, the evidence suggests a strong case for the argument that flagging U.S. resolve hastened the demise. That morale, esprit, and public support were critically interrelated variables in the overall equation seems equally clear.

The question then arises: was Vietnam an aberration, *sui generis* in the annals of warfare? If so, perhaps it is best to purge the Vietnam experience, to include its morale, esprit, and public support implications from our consciousness and press on to matters of greater import. The argument is tempting, but unrealistic. Indeed, the potential for "another Vietnam" is ever-present in an era of super-power confrontation via client-states and surrogate forces in the Third World. To many observers, El Salvador looms as a likely candidate. The merits of

that particular argument may be debated. However, the point remains that some form of limited war may well be the only viable alternative to annihilation or capitulation in the East-West struggle for power in the foreseeable future. Hence, the case for including morale, esprit, public support or some similar concept among the principles of war seems amply justified.

The principles of war as we know them today are the product of a long and evolutionary trend. They partake of Napoleon, Jomini, and Clausewitz. They benefit from the exegesis and refinements of J.F.C. Fuller and others following World War I. First published in an Army training regulation in 1921, they have changed little since.[47] They have, the new manual asserts "essentially stood the test of analysis, experimentation, and practice."[48]

Thus, in 1982, we find the nine principles of war, essentially unchanged, at least in name, since they were first codified by the Army in 1921; this despite U.S. experience in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the Dominican Republic plus vicarious exposure to numerous other conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli wars.

Actually though, the new Field Manual 100-1 does take a fresh look at the principles of war. It views them through the strategic as well as the tactical prism. Given the complexities of the contemporary world, this should be a useful and welcome change.

Also, the new manual goes a long way toward answering the question: what are the principles of war for? "For the strategist," they are a "set of military planning interrogatives - a set of questions that should be considered if military strategy is to best serve the national interest. For the tactician . . . (they are) an operational framework for the military actions he has been trained to carry out."[49]

The new look at the principles of war does not, however, extend to any serious analysis of morale as a factor in warfare. To the contrary, morale per se, gets not a line anywhere, not even an honorable mention! This is a curious omission indeed, given the historical importance of morale in war. It is even more curious, given the pivotal role that morale played in the Vietnam War.

Although morale is not found among the officially sanctioned principles of war for the United States Army, it is included among those of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.[50] Intuitively, one would expect the reverse to be the case. After all,democracies by definition ought to be more concerned with individual and group morale than totalitarian and authoritarian societies. Should not this concern extend to the army of a democratic society?

One could, of course, argue that morale is not included because matters of morale, esprit, and public support are so self-evident in the successful conduct of war that they

become ever-present considerations in the minds of decision-makers, both military and civilian. Unhappily, our recent history of warfare provides scant evidence for that argument. To the contrary, our experience in Vietnam suggests that substantive matters of morale received short shrift at the strategic level and left something to be desired at the tactical level.

Many of our allies and friends also include some notion of morale in their principles of war. For example, Great Britain and Australia call it "Maintenance of Morale" and the Australian Army manual entitled Combat Power devotes an entire chapter to "Morale." In an introductory paragraph, morale is referred to as "the force multiplier" of combat power. This issue of morale is examined in terms of the impact of such diverse areas as technological advances and societal trends on maintenance of morale. Medical treatment, education standards, the media, and the "comfortable" society are topics of special interest. Results of objective studies related to soldier performance trends under stress are also included. In short, morale is accorded a high priority, in strategic as well as tactical terms, in the literature of the Australian Army.[51]

The fact that our allies as well as our potential adversaries consider morale worthy of inclusion in the principles of war suggests that reconsideration on our part may be useful. Our recent experience, especially in Vietnam, indicates that such reconsideration may even be necessary.

Indeed, as I learned in researching material for this essay, a new principle, "public support," was contemplated in the draft stages of Field Manual 100-1.[52]

Further research revealed that "Public Support" was not only included in a revised draft; it was given top billing. Defined as "the physical and psychological support of the people as a force to strengthen and assist the direction of effort," it is called "an essential element of war" and "an all-encompassing principle which impacts on the strategic and tactical application of each of the remaining principles of war."[53]

This analysis of "Public Support" draws the linkage between the will of the American people and the existence of the Army. Moreover, it extends to considerations of public support at the strategic and the tactical level.[54]

MORALE - THE TENTH PRINCIPLE

Unfortunately, the enthusiasm of the drafters for the "principle" of Public Support was not shared by their superiors somewhere along the line to final approval of FM 100-1. Nevertheless, as I have argued, morale, esprit, and public support are critical variables in the conduct of war; it seems only logical that some concept that captures their essence ought to be included among the principles of war.

The alternative I propose is the adoption of a tenth principle of war - one which embodies the notion of morale

and the linkage of soldier, unit, Army, and National morale. While I prefer the term "morale" itself, for the simple reason that it has historical, contemporary, and logical legitimacy, I would concede that some other term (public support, national will, etc.) might be more descriptive. The point is, whatever the principle is called, it must underscore the symbiotic relationship between the military and the society we have sworn to defend.

To reiterate, whatever the reasons were for deleting "Public Support" as a principle of war in the approved version of FM 100-1, the case for elevating "Morale" to the level of a principle of war remains clear and compelling. History, precedent, and logic all favor such a course of action. As George Santayana cautioned, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." But, as Walter Millis warns us, "remembrance of the past is not enough."[55] We must also learn from our past to improve our present and secure our future.

Surely, reviving the principles of war as a "frame of reference for analysis of strategic and tactical issues" is a giant step forward in the learning process. Just as surely, adopting Morale as the tenth principle of war is another giant step toward assuring that <u>all relevant</u> strategic and tactical issues are analyzed. Our soldiers, our Army, and our Nation deserve no less.

ENDNOTES

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5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 631.

7. Ibid., p. 746.

8. Ibid., p. 750.

9. Quotes for the Military Writer (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 1974), p. 23-3. Hereinafter, called Quotes.

10. Ibid., p. 13-1

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.

13. Public Opinion Quarterly, Fall 1949, pp. 377-404.

14. Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, "Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II," Public Opinion Quarterly, Summer 1949, pp. 208-315.

15. See, for example, "Buddy Relations and Combat Performance," by Roger W. Little, in The New Military: Changing Patterns of Organization, edited by Morris Janowitz, 1964.

16. Ibid., pp. 28-29.

17. Charles C. Moskos, Jr., "Vietnam: Why Men Fight" in A Study of Organizational Leadership (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1976), pp. 291-302

18. Richard A. Gabriel and Paul L. Savage, Crisis in Command: Mismanagement in the Army (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), pp. 29-50.

19. For an unusually well-written treatment of these values, see John W. Gardner, Morale (New York: W.N. Norton & Co., Inc., 1978), especially pp. 28-34.

20. Quotes, p. 5-3.

21. Quotes, p. 7-3.

22. Hugh M. Arnold, "Official Justifications for American's Role in Indochina, 1949-67, Asian Affairs, September - October 1975, p. 31.

23. Harry G. Summers, Jr., On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 1981), p. 62.

24. John M. Collins, Grand Strategy: Principles and Practices (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1973), pp. 250-251.

25. Douglas Kinnard, The War Managers (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1977), p. 25.

26. Ibid.

27. Summers, On Strategy, p. 60.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., especially pp. 67-97.

30. Ibid., p. viii.

31. John F. Kennedy became enamored of "limited war" before he became President. During his brief tenure, the seeds of "limited war," as largely interpreted by civilian advisors were sown; so, too, were those of systems analysis, planted by McNamara, et. al. Unfortunately, they were to come a cropper.

32. Alain C. Enthoven and Wayne K. Smith, How Much is Enough: Shaping the Defense Program 1961-1969 (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 89-92.

33. Henry Kissinger, White House Years (Boston, Mass.: Little, Brown and Co., 1979), p. 34.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid., p. 35.

36. General Matthew B. Ridgway, Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway (New York: Harper & Bros., 1956), pp. 271-272.

37. Ibid., p. 277.

38. Ibid.

39. David Halberstam, The Best and the Brightest (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 143.

40. Charles B. MacDonald and Charles V.P. von Luttichau, "The U.S. Army in Vietnam," p. 645. This is a pamphlet-style revision of Chapter 28 from American Military History.

41. Ibid., p. 646.

42. For an excellent account of the media and Tet 1968, see Peter Braestrup's Big Story (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, Inc., 1977). I mentioned this book to Peter Arnett at Carlisle Barracks in 1981; Arnett implied that the media was much more accurate than portrayed by Braestrup. Yet, the latter makes a compelling case.

43. Lyndon Baines Johnson, The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency 1963-1969 (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), p. 384.

44. Clausewitz, On War, p. 89.

45. For a fascinating, first-hand account of the fall of South Vietnam to the Communist North Vietnamese, see Alan Dawson's 55 Days (London: Prentice Hall, 1977).

46. Clausewitz, On War, p. 91.

47. See, for example, "The Principles of War" by General Donn A. Starry in Military Review September 1981. In essence, this is pages 13 through 17 of the new FM 100-1 The Army, along with General Starry's commentary. Significantly, though, he closes his article with a plea for us to "understand the absolute need to marshal and sustain public support for these policies from the outset, especially if they involve military operations." (p. 12)

48. FM 100-1 The Army (Washington, D.C.: HQDA, 14 August 1981), p. 13.

49. Ibid.

50. Starry, "Principles of War," p. 6.

51. Combat Power, Australian Army, 1979. See especially Chapter 2, "Morale." I am indebted to my friend, colleague and USAWC classmate, Colonel John Stein for the loan of this manual as well as others on warfare and leadership.

52. Interview with Colonel Harry Summers, SSI, USAWC, 1982.

53. Revised Draft FM 100-1, pp. 3-1 to 3-3.

54. Ibid.

55. Walter Millis, Arms and the State (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1958), p. 3.