

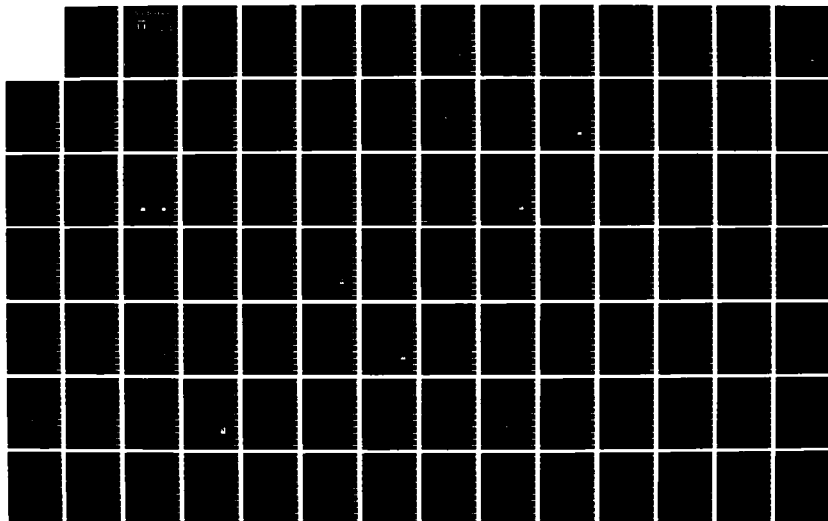
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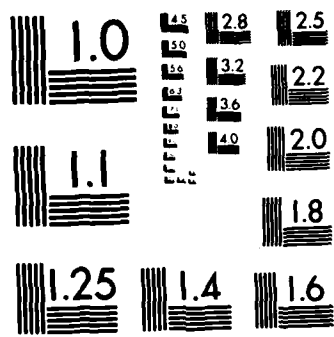
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# PARAMETERS

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# OPERATIONAL BRILLIANCE, STRATEGIC INCOMPETENCE: THE MILITARY REFORMERS AND THE GERMAN MODEL

by

JEFFREY RECORD

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**A**mong the many lessons to be drawn from a proper study of military history is that winning battles and even campaigns is not the same as winning wars. Strategy and the operational art are two separate and quite different things, and understanding the distinction between the two is critical to both the study and the waging of war.

The operational level of war relates to the employment of specific military forces in pursuit of specific military objectives within a specific theater of operations. Strategy addresses the broader challenge of maintaining a proper relationship between the military means available to the state and the political objectives on behalf of which those means are employed. The late Sir Basil Liddell Hart defined military strategy as "the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy,"<sup>1</sup> going on to say that "strategy depends for success, first and most, on a sound *calculation and coordination of the ends and the means.*"<sup>2</sup>

Or, to put it another way, whereas the operational art is the art of winning campaigns (and tactics the art of winning battles), strategy is the art of winning wars. Strategy is the calculated relationship between a state's political purpose and military power. Its formulation involves choices within a framework of finite resources and an ability

to distinguish between the desirable and the possible, the essential and the expendable. A sound sense of priorities and a willingness to make difficult choices among them are the essence of a sound strategy. Though it was Japan that brought the United States into the Second World War, the United States pursued a "Germany-first" strategy, concentrating the main weight of its military effort—its strategic *schwerpunkt*—against the most powerful and dangerous member of the Axis, while initially remaining on the strategic defensive against Japan in the Pacific. History has confirmed the wisdom of that choice, although it entailed some tough decisions early on in the war against Japan, including the decision to write off the Philippines.

It ought to go without saying that a strategy whose political aims far exceed the military resources available for their implementation is a standing invitation to disaster. In this regard, our own country's continuing and often casual accumulation of military obligations overseas unattended by the appropriate increases in military means necessary to fulfill those obligations ought to be of profound concern.<sup>3</sup> Also in this regard, and as the 40th anniversary of Germany's defeat in World War II recedes, it is important to remember why Germany lost. The causes of Germany's defeat not just in World

War II but also in World War I are of more than passing interest.

Present-day military reformers in the United States, all of whom stress the importance of studying military history, repeatedly hold up the pre-1945 German military as a model of military excellence (as indeed it was), and they would have our own armed forces emulate that model. The extensive literature on military reform bulges with admiring references to Clausewitz, Gneisenau, and Scharnhorst; to the *Generalstab* and its success in institutionalizing military excellence; and to the spectacular performances of the German army from the time of Moltke to Manstein. Deemed especially instructive by the reformers are the German army's campaigns during the periods 1917-1918 and 1940-1942, with the 1940 campaign against France and the Low Countries topping the list.

Yet, it may be asked, how is it that this repository of military excellence was twice defeated in this century? In perusing the military reform literature one is struck by the dearth of attention to the causes of Germany's defeat—in sharp contrast to the reformers' extensive treatment, at times bordering on the rhapsodical, of the German army's many operational triumphs.

Might there be a connection between the causes of Germany's defeat and the relative inattention paid to them by the reformers? I believe there is, and I believe that it lies in the realm of strategy. To be more specific, the reason that the German military was beaten in 1918 and in 1945—and the reason, it can be argued, that our own military reformers do not seem to care much why—is that neither the German military nor the American military reform movement has ever paid much attention to strategy. Both have concentrated almost exclusively on the operational level of war rather than (and, some would say, at the expense of) strategy.

Indeed, perhaps the greatest intellectual infirmity of the otherwise refreshing and long-overdue military reform movement in the United States is its seemingly profound indifference to the strategic level of war. While reform theorists have delved ex-

tensively and imaginatively into matters of weaponry, operational doctrine, and military organization, few have addressed the overarching questions of strategy. Fewer still have tackled nuclear conflict or even the relation of conventional military operations to the presence of nuclear weapons, something that never confronted the pre-1945 German military. And as for the German military model itself, though reformers concede the existence of different "styles of warfare" derived from unique national experiences, few have recognized much less discussed the vastly different historical and geostrategic conditions governing pre-1945 Germany and post-1945 America—differences that impede the US military, even should it wish to do so, from a wholesale adoption of the German model. Some reformers, for example, would abolish the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization and replace it with an American copy of the *Generalstab*. To be sure, there is little to be said for the JCS as it is now structured; but it is unwise to ignore Americans' historic and deep-seated aversion to any military instrument perceived, rightly or wrongly, to threaten the supremacy of civilian authority. Nor is any purpose served by ignoring the fact that the *Generalstab* arose much more easily in Germany than it could in the United States for the simple reason that the German military in the 19th century was a one-service organization.

**W**hat accounts for the reformers' inattention to strategy and to things nuclear? In their recently published book, *America Can Win, The Case for Military Reform*, Senator Gary Hart and William S. Lind state,

Military reform does not seek to define a new national or military strategy. Rather, its concern is to make the military instruments of strategy, the armed forces, effective. Why do we draw this distinction? In our fast-changing world, strategy may change quickly. Just a decade ago, the People's Republic of China was a strategic opponent; today it is a strategic friend. In this century,

Russia has twice been an ally; now it is an opponent. Germany, now an ally, was twice an enemy.

In contrast, changes in military doctrine and tactics, in style of warfare, in the institutional culture of the armed services, and even in military equipment are slower . . .

Many a freshman congressman has tried to sound knowledgeable on defense by saying, "You must tell us what the strategy is before we can decide on anything else." This is not a useful approach to the problem. Of course we need a sound, clear strategy . . . But most of the issues that affect whether or not our forces can win in combat on the tactical and operational levels must be independent of strategy, because strategy is likely to change more rapidly than we can change our policies and practices in these other areas.<sup>4</sup>

Such reasoning is at best incomplete and at worst misleading. Admittedly, the ingredients of success at the tactical and operational levels of war do not derive directly from strategy and from strategic decisions. Yet, isn't the purpose of gaining tactical and operational successes to achieve favorable strategic outcomes? And doesn't Germany's record in this century, as well as our own in Vietnam, show that tactical and operational victories are irrelevant if they are not attended and informed by a sound and coherent strategy?

With respect to nuclear war, Hart and Lind argue that

military reform does not directly apply [to] nuclear war [for] two obvious reasons. First, it makes no sense to speak of winning a nuclear war. A nuclear conflict would be a cataclysm for all those it touched. There would be nothing to distinguish victors from vanquished among the corpses. Second, and obvious after a moment's reflection, is the fact that there is no such thing as a nuclear war except as a hypothesized form of combat. We know the power of nuclear weapons, so we know their use would be a catastrophe. But beyond that, we know nothing. There is no combat experience in

nuclear war, so all thinking is pure speculation. The basis for military reform-type analysis does not exist.<sup>5</sup>

The reformers' rejection of nuclear war as suitable for "reform-type" analysis is more convincing than their rejection of strategy. Yet in a war with the Soviet Union, which remains the central focus of US defense planning, the mere presence of nuclear weapons, even if not a single one was fired, may be expected to exert an enormous influence on the conduct of conventional force operations. For example, otherwise desirable force concentrations are likely to be assiduously avoided for fear of providing lucrative targets for nuclear fire; and in the event of a NATO-Warsaw Pact war, the Soviets might well go for a "city-hugging" advance to preclude NATO from using nuclear weapons on its own territory. Nuclear "strategy" is predominantly theological in character, but the reformers would do well to explore the effect of the presence of nuclear weapons on non-nuclear operations.

None of this is to argue that the reformers' focus on the operational level of war is misplaced—only that it is insufficient. The reformers seek to instill in the American military the keys to operational success which they correctly assert were manifest in the pre-1945 German army: maneuver doctrine, mission-type orders, subordinate commander independence and initiative, seemingly indestructible small-unit cohesion on the battlefield, and weapons driven not by

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pursuit of technology for its own sake but crafted to accommodate real tactical experience and the rigors of actual combat.

The reformers also rightly posit the need for substantial improvement in the US military's operational performance, and they have contributed much to the doctrinal and force-structural renaissance now underway in the US Army, if not the other services. The operational performance of American arms since MacArthur's brilliant stroke at Inchon has been, to put it mildly, less than impressive. The history of the US military during the past 35 years has been a history largely of defeats, miscarriages, and flawed victories, running from the rout of US forces along the Yalu through Vietnam and down to the bungled Iranian hostage rescue mission and the decimation of a Marine contingent in Beirut at the hands of a lone terrorist.<sup>6</sup> The reformers are also on solid ground in claiming that this dismal record admits of no convincing explanation other than the presence within the US military of profound institutional deformities and doctrinal deficiencies.

The Pentagon *has* become little more than just another giant government bureaucracy; many extant service personnel and promotion policies *do* corrode unit cohesion under fire; reliance on a firepower-attrition doctrine *is* a recipe for defeat against a firepower-superior opponent; and infatuation with technology *does* breed an insensitivity to alternative and often better tactical and operational solutions to military problems.

The reformers are no less right in pointing to the German army as an inspiring model of operational effectiveness. From Königgrätz to the Kiev cauldron, the German army routinely outperformed its opponents on the battlefield. And whereas Germany's enemies occasionally produced a brilliant field commander—an Allenby, a Brusilov, a Zhukov, a Patton, a MacArthur, or an O'Connor—the *Generalstab* system yielded an assemblage of operational talent unparalleled in any other modern military.

Notwithstanding their operational brilliance, however, the Germans were beaten in

1918 and crushed in 1945. And it is here that the risks of indiscriminate reliance on the German model, and the potential penalties of the reformers' obsession with the operational level of war, become glaringly apparent.

**T**he pre-1945 German military paid even less attention to strategy than have the reformers, apparently assuming, as do some of the reformers by implication, mastery of the operational art to be sufficient in and of itself to guarantee favorable strategic outcomes. This is not only to misunderstand the essence of strategy but also to ignore the critical distinction between strategy and operations. One is reminded of the remark made to Colonel Harry G. Summers, Jr., in 1975 by a North Vietnamese colonel. When Summers averred that "you never defeated us on the battlefield," the North Vietnamese colonel replied, "That may be so, but it is also irrelevant."

The Germans, in spite of their stunning operational triumphs, were defeated in World Wars I and II because they were strategically incompetent: they lacked the military means, in quantity and in kind, to fulfill the political ends for which they waged war. Germany's political reach consistently exceeded her military grasp. If there is one lesson to be drawn from Germany's military fate in this century, it is that operational competence, while indispensable to victory, is no substitute for a sound and coherent strategy. The capacity of operational mastery to offset strategic disadvantages (e.g. resource inferiority, vulnerable borders, constrained access to the high seas, lack of allies, lack of internal political cohesion) is inherently limited. Having plenty of Mansteins and Guderians or Lees and Jacksons at one's disposal counts for little in the absence of a Bismarck, a George Marshall, or a U. S. Grant. For it is the latter types who provide a clear appreciation not just of the operationally desirable but of the strategically possible.

In retrospect the mind boggles at the magnitude of Germany's strategic incompetence, though in all fairness it is to be recognized that this condition afflicted

Germany's civilian leadership as much as it did the *Generalstab*. Take, for example, the vaunted Schlieffen Plan, which governed the German army's opening moves in 1914. Leaving aside its faulty premises,<sup>8</sup> its rigidity and complexity, and its utter incompatibility with contemporary technological limitations on tactical mobility,<sup>9</sup> the Schlieffen Plan was a strategic disaster. Why? Because it violated Belgium's neutrality, and in so doing made Great Britain's entry into the war inevitable—Britain, a country not only invulnerable to direct attack but also capable, thanks to her control of the seas, of suffocating the economic wellsprings of German military power.

Germany's casual willingness to court strategic disaster for the sake of immediate operational gain was repeated, this time with fatal results, in early 1917, when the *Generalstab* prevailed upon a reluctant Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg to resume unrestricted submarine warfare in the North Atlantic. This decision sealed Germany's military fate by adding the United States and its vast human and industrial resources to Berlin's already burgeoning list of enemies.

Germany's lack of strategic common sense was no less manifest in World War II. Although the German military entered the war as the only one to have adapted its force structure and doctrine effectively to the opportunities afforded by the internal combustion engine, and though the German army campaigns of 1940-1941 were operational masterpieces, the *Generalstab* again proved unable to convert operational victories into a favorable strategic decision. As in 1914-1918, the problem in 1939-1945 was not the quality of Germany's military power but the lack of enough of it. Nazi Germany's strategic objectives were defined by Adolf Hitler and entailed nothing less than the conquest of Europe. As such, they far exceeded Germany's military means, as a number of general officers, including Ludwig Beck and Franz Halder, attempted unsuccessfully to point out to Hitler.<sup>10</sup> Inability to relate ends to means was evident in Hitler's decision to invade Russia, especially before Great Britain had been driven out of the war,

and even more so in the Third Reich's incredible indifference to the fatal strategic consequences of attempting to make war simultaneously against Russia, Great Britain, and the United States. The latter two countries were maritime powers beyond the reach of Germany's almost exclusively land-oriented military, which had no experience or interest in amphibious operations.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, Germany's utterly gratuitous declaration of war on the United States following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor must go down as one of the most strategically irresponsible actions ever taken by a nation-state.

To be sure, imperial Japan, Germany's only militarily impressive ally in either world war, did possess a formidable army and navy that succeeded in tying down sizable US military resources that otherwise would have been directed against Germany. But Japan's decision to make war on the United States was if anything even more mindless than Germany's. In December 1941 Japan's gross national product was but ten percent that of the United States, and the bulk of the Japanese army was entangled in an unwinnable war in China's vast interior.

No less fatal, if perhaps more remarkable, was Germany's failure to marshal the human, industrial, and scientific bases of modern military power to a degree even remotely approaching that of her main enemies. In contrast to Ludendorff's total mobilization of Germany's resources during the last year of World War I, the German economy under Hitler was a disjointed, ramshackle affair. It lacked centralized direction and was constantly plagued by the military's insatiable demand for skilled manpower, by the uneconomic dictates of Nazi ideology, and by the Nazi leadership's need to maintain a high level of domestic political popularity. Thus a number of army divisions actually were demobilized following the fall of France in 1940, even though Germany was still at war with Great Britain and Hitler was planning soon to invade the largest land power in the world. Thus German women were never effectively mobilized for war work because their role under Nazi ideology was to stay at home and breed future

Nazis. Thus in 1941 Hitler refused to issue antifreeze and winter clothing to army units poised to invade Russia for fear that to do so would demoralize them by implying a campaign lasting more than a few weeks. Thus German war production, which remained on a single-shift basis until 1942 with other industries continuing to spew out consumer goods, lagged behind that of Britain alone, to say nothing of American and Russian production. Thus, while the United States was investing vast amounts of money and scientific talent in the Manhattan Project, the Nazi regime, which regarded nuclear physics as "Jewish" physics (because of its association with Einstein and other prominent Jewish scientists), continued to conscript students of nuclear physics into the army. Is it any wonder that most of the war's great technological innovations, including radar, the proximity fuse, and the atomic bomb, were the products not of German science but of American and British science? Even Germany's lead in rocketry and jet propulsion counted for nothing in the end because Germany never fully mastered the philosophy and techniques of mass production.

No less a testimony to Germany's strategic incompetence was her failure, before both world wars, to attract allies in quantity or in quality that might have eliminated or at least reduced the fatal imbalance between her military means and her political ambitions in Europe. In his *Mein Kampf*, Hitler excoriated pre-1914 German diplomacy's failure to acquire powerful allies for the Second Reich; Germany's only notable European ally in World War I was Austro-Hungary, a militarily ineffectual and politically decayed state that by the end of 1917 had become a decided strategic liability to Germany. It was Hitler's view (at least in 1925) that Germany's proper place in Europe could be attained only in alliance with Great Britain and fascist Italy.<sup>12</sup> Yet Hitler ended up, as had the Kaiser before him, going to war *against* England and without a single European ally (with the temporary exception of the Soviet Union from 1939 to 1941) even remotely comparable in size and strength to

the major partners of the coalition arrayed against Germany. If Germany's feckless challenge to British naval supremacy and her subsequent violation of Belgium's neutrality made Britain's entry into the war against Germany in 1914 inevitable, so too did Hitler's brutal ideology, his unlimited ambitions, and his lies, deceit, and broken promises rule out any prospect of an Anglo-German alliance in the 1930s. Moreover, if Germany's World War I alliance with Vienna was the equivalent of being shackled to a corpse, Hitler's long and ultimately successful courtship of Mussolini's Italy admits of no strategic logic whatsoever. Strategically, it probably cost Germany more to have Italy as an ally than simply to have fought her as an enemy. From the Balkans to North Africa to the Italian peninsula itself, the repeated failures of Italian arms compelled Germany to divert substantial and irreplaceable military resources to what were, for Germany, secondary theaters of operations.

In short, Germany, having failed to create enough military power on her own, also failed to acquire allies of sufficient weight to bring Germany's military means and political ends into reasonable harmony. Parenthetically, it might be added that the greatest strategic advantage the United States still enjoys over the Soviet Union today, and one not likely to disappear, is that the United States is surrounded by economically robust, militarily powerful, and politically reliable allies (including Germany), whereas the Soviet Union has but a few small and relatively weak military partners, most of them of questionable loyalty and all of them a drain on the Soviet exchequer.

What is amazing is not that Germany was beaten in 1918 and 1945, but that she managed to fight so well for so long. That she did so is a tribute to the German military's exceptional operational brilliance.

**Y**et to conclude that Germany's defeat lay in the realm of strategy, and that operational excellence is no substitute for a sound and coherent strategy, is not to conclude that operational excellence is dispensable or that good strategy alone is

sufficient to guarantee a decisive victory. Operational incompetence has ruined many an imaginative and potentially war-winning move, such as the Army of the Potomac's peninsular campaign of 1862 and the Anglo-French campaign of 1915 in the Dardanelles. Nor is it to argue that the focus of American military reformers on the operational level of war is misplaced, or that there is no room for improvement in the US military's record in this regard.

It is simply to recognize that the operational art cannot be divorced from an informative strategy, and that battles and campaigns, if they are to yield termination of war on favorable strategic terms, must be guided by a sound coordination of ends and means; by an ability to distinguish between the desirable and the possible, the indispensable and the expendable; and above all, by a capacity and willingness to make hard choices. Because the Confederacy had no coherent strategy, Jackson's masterful Valley Campaign, Forrest's spectacular raids, and Lee's brilliant strokes at Chancellorsville all counted for nothing in the end. For the same reason, Manstein and Guderian ended their careers in prisoner-of-war cages. And it might be added that for the United States nothing can unravel a sound strategy more quickly than permitting a theater commander's predictable demands for evermore resources and operational authority to take precedence over strategic considerations beyond that theater. This was the nub of the Truman-MacArthur controversy of 1951.

It is to be hoped that someday the reformers will bring to bear on the strategic level of war the same kind of intellectual firepower they have directed at the operational level. Such attention is sorely needed. What has passed for strategy in the United States during the past forty years all too often has been little more than aggregations of service budget requests undisciplined either by an appreciation of the limitations of US military power or by a willingness to make unpleasant choices. The United States had no strategy in Vietnam, and is today, like Germany past, plagued by a disparity between military means and political ends

abroad of such enormity as to cast serious doubt upon America's ability to avoid sharing Germany's fate in the event of a major conflict.

#### NOTES

1. B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967), p. 335.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 336 (italics original).
3. The Carter Doctrine of 1980 imposed upon an already thinly stretched US military a set of demanding new military obligations in the Middle East—a vast and logistically remote region of the world. The doctrine has yet to be attended by the creation of additional military power commensurate with the fulfillment of those obligations; most of the forces "assigned" to the US Central Command, the instrument of US military intervention in Southwest Asia, are also committed to the defense of Europe and Northeast Asia.
4. Gary Hart with William S. Lind, *America Can Win, The Case for Military Reform* (Bethesda, Md.: Adler and Adler, 1986), pp. 16-17.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
6. Nor was the 1983 US invasion of Grenada really an exception. It certainly was not a meaningful test of American military competence. Grenada was a military success simply because it could have been nothing else, given our crushing numerical preponderance over the island's few, poorly armed, and badly trained defenders. Operation Urgent Fury was nonetheless marred by serious flaws in organization, planning, and execution which against a less ragtag enemy could have proved disabling.
7. Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy, A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1982), p. 1.
8. Among the Schlieffen Plan's erroneous premises were (1) that the Belgian government and army would at best offer only token resistance to the German army's violation of its territory; (2) that the Russian army would not be in a position to launch an offensive in the direction of East Prussia until a decision had been reached in the West; and (3) that the French would remain wedded to their idiotic Plan XVII until it was too late to make the necessary force redistributions to deal with the Germans' intended envelopment of Paris from the city's western and southwestern approaches.
9. See chapter four in Martin van Creveld, *Supplying War, Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1977).
10. See chapters 11 and 12 in Walter Goerlitz, *History of the German General Staff, 1657-1945* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985); and William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, A History of Nazi Germany* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), pp. 366-72.
11. In his monumental *On War*, Clausewitz devotes only a few paragraphs to sea power and naval warfare, which is testimony to Prussia's exclusive historical concentration upon continental warfare. This concentration remained unshaken down through the middle of the 20th Century. Although Tirpitz built a magnificent surface fleet for Germany in the decades preceding 1914, when war came neither he nor anyone else in Germany could quite figure out what to do with it. Nor did the German navy or the *Generalstab* ever address the challenge of amphibious warfare, despite German diplomacy's failure to keep Great Britain out of either world war.
12. *Mein Kampf*, trans. by Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1971), pp. 665-66.

# THE OPERATIONAL TRILOGY

by

JOHN F. MEEHAN III

With the 1982 revision of the Army's basic manual on doctrine, Field Manual 100-5, a new term officially entered the Army's lexicon. The official recognition that there was such a thing as the "operational level" of war was long overdue, but the appearance of this "new" term in conjunction with the promulgation of a new doctrine—AirLand Battle—quite naturally led to a presumption that the two concepts were related. They are not. AirLand Battle is a tactical doctrine, a doctrine essentially oriented on how to fight.<sup>1</sup> The operational level of war is, by definition, above tactics. The operational level of war links tactical activities to strategic goals. It defines what is to be accomplished, not how to do it. To a large degree the 1982 revision of FM 100-5, with its new concepts, was a sign that the Army finally was coming to grips with the lessons of Vietnam. That these new lessons are simply restatements of the old is a fact that still has not been fully accepted.

The failure to define clearly the term "operational level" has caused confusion, and to date much of the discussion on the topic has centered on the search for an exact definition. As initially defined in FM 100-5, the operational level of war was the use of available military forces to attain strategic goals within a theater of war. Unfortunately, the manual then went on to say, "Most simply, it is the theory of larger unit operations."<sup>2</sup> That the two statements are contradictory did not seem important as long as the definition of the operational level had the same meaning as the term "operational art" used by the Soviets, who have devoted considerable intellectual capital to developing the concept, and who possess an army well

experienced at the operational level. It has become apparent, however, that Soviet doctrinal concepts cannot be grafted directly onto the American version. The Soviet concept of operational art simply is not synonymous with the operational level of war which is now part of US Army doctrine. As it has evolved, the American use of the term "operational level of war" is considerably different from the Soviet model. As the 1986 version of FM 100-5 recognizes, the operational level of war is not tied to force size but to the objectives which are sought.<sup>3</sup> If military force is committed to achieve a strategic objective, then the military activities which follow are at the operational level.

## STRATEGIES

While the operational trilogy—the hierarchical flow of conceptual thought from the strategic to the operational to the tactical levels of war—seems clear enough, the actual relationships are complex. The process begins with the identification of national objectives and the selection of a national strategy that will accomplish those objectives. This national strategy will employ all four elements of power—political, economic, psychological, and military—and the employment of each of these elements of power requires the same conceptual clarity as the use of the military element.<sup>4</sup>

Within the military strategy component of the national strategy, strategic military objectives are identified. These objectives are assigned to the appropriate military commander, normally a theater commander, who must then develop a theater military strategy that will achieve the strategic objectives

assigned to him. He will pick operational-level objectives that will enable him to execute his strategy and define the operational concepts which he feels are most appropriate. Finally, he will determine the military resources needed. In a world of unconstrained resources there would be only a low possibility of failure. In reality, the commander almost certainly will not have all the resources he desires. If he cannot achieve his operational objectives with the resources given, he has only three basic choices—obtain more resources, accept an increased risk of failure, or revise his operational concepts. If he chooses to revise his operational concepts, care must be taken to ensure that they continue to support the theater strategy. If not, changes up to and including a revision of national objectives may be required. Unfortunately, the standard response when faced with resource scarcity is to make no changes, but to accept an increased level of risk. In peacetime, in the absence of more serious consequences, this is the easiest of the three choices. It is also the most dangerous.

Upon examining the three levels of war, most officers will feel fairly comfortable with their understanding of the strategic level. Throughout the US system of service schools, officers have been taught that the four elements of national power must be used in combination to achieve national objectives. Theoretically, all are on firm ground in such an understanding. If asked to state the strategy of the United States, however, many officers would give vague answers, and perhaps most would maintain that there is no clearly defined national strategy, except that of expediency. If further pressed, they might define our strategy as deterrence, or containment, or—if thinking in nuclear terms—Mutual Assured Destruction. All of these answers are incorrect. Deterrence and containment are objectives, not strategies, and MAD is nothing more than a concept to help achieve the objective of deterrence in one clearly defined aspect, the nuclear.

National objectives determine the national strategy. As trite as it may sound, America's national objectives are incorporated in Michael Novak's phrase "democratic

capitalism."<sup>5</sup> His concept of democratic capitalism as an ideology includes and articulates such broad national objectives as peace, security, human rights, and related concepts which are often dismissed as platitudes. Because they are the core beliefs of our society, it is taken for granted that these objectives would be best met in a free, capitalist, democratic world. It is from national objectives such as these that the national strategy is derived. These ideological objectives require a global orientation.

The real but unstated strategy of the United States to achieve these objectives is to use the four elements of power in such a manner that, in the aggregate, the Soviet Union remains, or perceives itself to be, weaker than the United States. The Soviets represent the most significant impediment to the long-term development of a free, democratic world. If they are militarily stronger at the strategic level, we can compensate for that by our overwhelming economic might or, to a lesser extent, by the other two elements of power.

In the military arena, the national military strategy is to construct and position military forces in such a manner as to preclude war while simultaneously containing Soviet imperialism. If Soviet military power can be neutralized, then it is assumed that the other three elements of power, based on the inherent strengths of the American system, will ultimately lead to the accomplishment of

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the national objectives. Depending on the circumstances, the military objective is either military containment or deterrence. For the central nuclear forces, the objective is primarily deterrence, while in the conventional arena it is primarily containment. The decision to build the Peacemaker ICBM (MX) is a decision in support of the national military strategy, as is the decision on how many forces should be deployed in Europe, or in El Salvador. In essence, the US Fifth Corps in Germany and the training team in El Salvador both have the same mission—to curtail the expansion of Soviet power. The US conventional military strategy, by definition, is a global strategy—if the Soviet Union is not contained, then ultimately the United States will stand alone and lose. In this sense El Salvador may be considered as important as the Federal Republic of Germany. The difference is that the loss of Germany would have immediate consequences and probably could not be reversed. A roll-back of communist expansion on the fringes is always possible.

At the theater level, the United States employs all elements of power to achieve the national objective but the choice of operational concepts must be tailored to the specific theater objectives. The basic military strategy of constructing and positioning forces in order to deter war, while containing Soviet power, must be reflected in these concepts. Deterrence is the preferred objective: only when deterrence fails is it necessary to contain by the *use* of military force.

The objectives to be obtained in a theater reflect a willingness to use force that is inverse to the importance of the theater itself. For the defense of the continental United States, the core area the loss of which cannot be accepted, the objective is that of deterrence by the threat of punishment with minimal attention devoted to warfighting issues. Here the failure of deterrence is synonymous with the failure to achieve the national objective. The operational concept in the core area is Mutual Assured Destruction. At the next level of importance, the vital areas, the emphasis remains on deterrence by

punishment, but warfighting considerations are now more visible as deterrence by a denial of victory is included as a conceivable response in the interest of containment. The NATO strategy of Flexible Response reflects both types of deterrence and therefore includes a mix of operational concepts: forward defense, continuous defense, forward deployment, strategic mobility, and graduated escalation. These concepts support both types of deterrence. At the next level, in critical areas such as Korea, the objective of deterrence by punishment has virtually disappeared, and is replaced by the objective of deterrence by denial of victory—a warfighting approach. Many of the operational concepts remain the same. Finally, in areas still lower in importance such as El Salvador—South Vietnam offered another good example—the objective remains deterrence, but, in the absence of means to achieve this objective, containment often must be accomplished by the use of conventional forces. The operational concepts remain the same but at this level the concepts of FM 100-20, the Internal Defense and Development concepts, play a key role.

The importance of a theater can change over time and its objectives and operational concepts will also evolve. In the mid-1970s, at the height of the oil crisis, Iranian oil was considered essential to the United States and our initial planning stressed the use of nuclear weapons in a deterrence-by-punishment and deterrence-by-denial strategy. Iran was viewed as a vital area with virtually the same importance as Europe, and therefore a similar strategy was appropriate. Conventional force was to be used reluctantly, and only in the event deterrence of Soviet aggression failed. As the situation evolved, with the hostility of the new regime and the decreasing need for oil, the theater no longer was vital but was viewed as a critical area, with the level of sensitivity of Korea rather than Europe, and the military strategy for the theater has changed accordingly. Deterrence by punishment is the preferred solution, but the emphasis is now deterrence by the denial of victory, a warfighting approach in the Middle East.

A fundamental restriction on the execution of this national strategy is the existence of a basic structural weakness, one found in all democracies but accentuated in ours. The four elements of power in our system are poorly coordinated, and in fact all may not be consciously used. As a result, we expect one of the four elements, the military, to achieve the desired results with minimal assistance from the political, economic, and psychological elements. The military element is not only the most visible of the four, but arguably the simplest to use. We lack the recognition that even in peacetime a nation must have a national strategy that fully employs all the assets of the state. When actual conflict breaks out and a democracy mobilizes its assets, the task becomes easier; Clausewitz tells us that "as policy dissolves into enmity war becomes simpler."<sup>6</sup> In peacetime, however, the maintenance of a coherent national strategy that employs all the elements of power is the most difficult task our society faces.

A brief look at the low end of the operational trilogy, the tactical level, also reveals some basic conceptual problems. As is true at the other levels of war, all four elements of power are operative at the tactical level. At this level the military element is clearly predominant, however, and for this reason we tend to feel most comfortable with our understanding of things tactical. We are aware that the other elements of power have a role at the tactical level, but we tend to discount them. In Vietnam, the practice of body counts was a reflection of the political element of power at the tactical level, and the Chieu Hoi program for rehabilitating captured or disaffected VC was both political and psychological. We are aware of the existence of factors such as these at the tactical level, and of course at the other levels, but particularly in tactical activity we tend to view them as distractions from the primary task. At the tactical level especially, we see our task as the employment of the military element of power and do not regard the other elements of power as forces to be orchestrated in conjunction with the military to achieve results.

## OPERATIONAL LEVEL

The middle of the operational trilogy, the operational level, also contains all four elements of power. At this level, however, the weight of each is more nearly equal. The military man who fails to incorporate the other three elements of power into his planning at the operational level dramatically increases the chances of failure.

Because a sufficiently clear and precise definition of "operational level" has yet to be broadly established, many officers remain uncomfortable with the concept. On the whole, we will more or less readily admit that we do not fully understand it. Indeed, the operational level of war is not something that *can* be easily understood. It demands hard reflection and study. Warfare at the operational level, or at any level, has characteristics of both art and science. A science is more definite and can be learned more easily; the art form is indefinite, inexact, and poses a greater need for creativity and continuing study. In contrast to the tactical level, which has a much heavier science component, the operational level has a heavier art component, although the science component remains. It is the art component of the operational level which makes us uncomfortable. Part of the discomfort comes from the problems with terminology—at the tactical level there is a well-developed language that we are familiar with and can use freely and with effect, and even at the strategic level a vocabulary is available, if mostly developed by civilian theoreticians rather than military practitioners. Because there is no historically accepted vocabulary at the operational level, however, the tendency is to use terms from both the tactical and strategic lexicons, and this practice often leads to confusion.

Despite our discomfort, we do have a fairly firm understanding of the science component of the operational level. For example, the integration of air with ground operations at the theater level, the structure and functioning of intelligence nets, command and control structures—these are things we understand and which can be



taught. The art of the operational level is more elusive.

An understanding of the art component of the operational level must begin with the realization that the operational level, stripped of all its pretensions, is a matter of perspective. The operational level of war requires a theater perspective. Regardless of size, if military force is being used to achieve a strategic objective, then it is being employed at the operational level. In practical terms, it is the unified commands that are key. As these commands employ force to achieve strategic objectives, they operate by definition at the operational level. In the larger unified commands, such as the European or the Pacific Command, the theater commander may remain in his strategic role by delegating the strategic tasks to subordinate commands. Through the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) each of the unified commands is assigned strategic objectives, a portion of the national military objectives. Again, as an impediment to the rational functioning of the system, the JSCP assigns primarily military tasks—there is no equivalent mechanism to promulgate tasks reflecting the other three elements of power.

In spite of the criticism often leveled at the JSCP, it is an efficient articulator of strategic tasks. In the traditional sense, the strategic guidance to a theater should identify the enemy, stipulate the goal or tasks to be accomplished, and allocate the forces and support resources available for planning. Additionally, strategic guidance must also impose restrictions on the conduct of military operations by defining the political, economic, psychological, and military bounds within which the command must operate. The JSCP performs all of these traditional guidance functions. As is true in any planning cycle, the guidance in the JSCP is developed through successive refinements in conjunction with the unified commands. As a result of this process, strategic tasks that cannot be accomplished by the unified commands with available resources will be avoided. For planning purposes, the forces assigned to unified commands are restricted by a dual allocation process. The JSCP

identifies the forces available for planning, but it is the Joint Operational Planning System (JOPS) which is the ultimate allocator of forces, since strategic mobility limitations impose the most fundamental of all constraints. The JOPS tells the commander when and where forces can be made available. The unified commander's concept will be modified through subsequent iterations as the JOPS plans are developed. The theater employment plan must, in the final analysis, be based on the JOPS-defined flow of forces. As Frederick the Great noted, the sign of wisdom in a military commander is that he will "undertake only what is possible." Commanders who base their plans on overly optimistic assumptions as to what forces will be available will not meet Frederick's definition of a wise commander.

### THEATER STRATEGY

Based on assigned objectives from the JSCP, which may be further clarified by the JCS either through the JOPS or "off-line," the unified commander must then develop a military strategy for the region—a task that is done in fact, if not in name. In Europe, the theater strategy is a coalition/combined strategy, the strategy of Flexible Response. The other unified commands also must have a theater strategy. For example, the Southern Command must have a theater strategy, and it is clear from articles published by the command that it does. The difficulty with the Southern Command's strategy, and with those of the other unified commands, is that they have not been reduced to writing, nor are they formally approved at the national level as a strategy. Because they are not written documents, they have a tendency to change with political administrations, and with commanders. The danger with an unwritten strategy is that it may ultimately degenerate into a strategy of expediency. The theater perspective, key to the operational level, can be lost over time.

If the operational level of war involves a theater perspective on the use of military force, then we would expect a theater to have defined objectives and a theater strategy

designed to accomplish those objectives. Though, strangely it would seem, we have no clear doctrinal definition of a theater, one seems easy enough to describe. The NATO area of operations, from Norway to Turkey and including the Atlantic Command, can be best described as a theater of war, and the new generation of field manuals does just that. What is missing from our terminology is the old term "theater of operations"—currently being referred to in some US Army documents as an area of operations.<sup>9</sup> A theater of operations can, and perhaps should, have its own strategy. It will, at a minimum, be assigned strategic objectives. To use the NATO example, MC 14/3 may be an appropriate strategy for Allied Forces, Central Region, but the strategy of Flexible Response, with its escalatory ladder from direct defense to strategic nuclear exchange, may not be the best strategy for Eastern Turkey, Northern Norway, or the Atlantic. A theater of operations, then, may have its own strategy to support both the strategy of the theater of war and the national military strategy. Korea, a theater of operations in the Pacific theater of war, does have its own strategy, that of deterrence through victory-denial based on the concept of forward defense. It supports but of course differs from the strategy of the region as a whole. The determination of a theater strategy is one of the most critical steps in the entire planning process. As Field Marshall Keitel pointed out at the Nuremberg trials, "A mistake in strategy can only be made good in the next war."<sup>10</sup> One hopes that no American general ever need make such a statement to his conquerors.

The difficulty, of course, is that the correct theater strategy is not self-evident. It can only be developed through a clear understanding of the national military objectives and the nature of the theater itself. This theater evaluation must examine the employment of all four elements of power from the theater perspective. From an analysis of the effectiveness of these factors, the center of gravity—the objective which, when gained, will lead to mission accomplishment—for the theater must be selected. The

identification of the enemy's center of gravity is at the heart of the operational level. Traditionally, the US Army has concentrated on the destruction of enemy forces as being the one sure event that would guarantee success; enemy forces often will be, in fact, the center of gravity. Often too, however, enemy forces will not be the correct center of gravity. The center of gravity at the theater level may be the will of the enemy to resist, his political alliance, or even a psychological goal (from the North Vietnamese perspective, war weariness was our center of gravity in the Vietnam War). The difficulties involved in selecting the correct center of gravity provide a clear example of the art component at the operational level.<sup>10</sup> In our current environment, statements that we must get "within the enemy's decision cycle," that our objective is the "mind of the enemy," that "destruction of his command and control are key," all are attempts to define the Soviet center of gravity at the operational level. Clausewitz was unkind enough to point out that there may be several centers of gravity.<sup>11</sup> The key to the operational level is to identify and destroy the enemy's center of gravity while protecting your own. If you orient on a false center of gravity, your strategy will be wrong by definition, and as Keitel pointed out, you'll probably have to wait for the next war to rectify your error.

Unfortunately, even choosing the correct center of gravity as an objective provides no guarantee of achieving it, and in that failure, too, are wars lost. In Vietnam, infiltration was identified as the operational center of gravity—the one event of such importance that if it could be controlled, the war would be won. In a broader strategic sense, we determined that the isolation of North Vietnam from its external suppliers and from its ability to support operations in the South was the objective. Having chosen both a strategic and an operational center of gravity, we then were unwilling to take the steps necessary to accomplish the tasks that the choices dictated. Being thus unwilling, we gradually and unwittingly gravitated to an easier but false center of gravity, the destruction of the enemy's forces and his will.

This focused US attention on what we understood best, tactical operations aimed at the destruction of enemy forces. In the process, of course, we failed at the strategic level to protect our own center of gravity—the political and psychological willingness to continue—and we lost the war. Events in El Salvador indicate that we may have learned our lesson: the 55-man training team may not be the most efficacious military response, but it does not directly threaten American will to the degree that US casualties would.

A theater strategy, then, employs all four elements of power to attack the enemy's center of gravity and protect one's own. The theater strategy is the be-all and end-all of war. It is inappropriate to complain of winning the war militarily and losing politically. You either achieve your objectives or you don't, and military forces are just one of the instruments to be used. It is possible to win all the battles and still lose the war. If the battles do not lead to the achievement of the strategic objective, then, successful or not, they are just so much wasted effort. The task of the operational-level planner, the operational-level commander, is to see that the operations and battles do lead to the accomplishment of the strategic objective. He must keep his perspective.

### THE CAMPAIGN PLAN

It is through the mechanism of the campaign plan that the operational-level commander ensures that events lead to achievement of the strategic goal. The key and overwhelming responsibility of the operational-level commander is one of focus. He must remain focused on the strategic objective and on the center of gravity. His responsibility is to ensure that his actions lead to the achievement of the necessary results. If he loses his focus, if he becomes actively involved in the tactical activities of his command to the extent that he loses his perspective, he may win the battles but fail to execute his mission. The identification of the enemy's center of gravity and the single-minded focus on the sequence of actions necessary to expose and destroy it are the essence of operational art. This was our great

failure in Vietnam. We became so enamored of tactical successes that we failed to recognize that the sum of these tactical successes would not yield the strategic objective we sought. If the key responsibility of the commander is focus, then his key decisions are who, when, and where to fight. It is theoretically possible to plan a losing battle in the expectation that this loss will directly contribute to the overall operational goal. This concept has much in common with economy-of-force operations.

While the idea of the campaign plan has been recently imbued with a high level of mysticism, it is in fact a reversion to the procedures of the past. During World War II campaign plans were routinely prepared to direct theater-level operations. The campaign plan remains part of our doctrine, and it is defined and explained in JCS Pub 2, to include a sample format. The format itself is simply an adaptation of the five-paragraph field order with which most US officers are familiar. An examination of campaign plans of the past demonstrates that certain essential elements must be present, not all of which are properly included in the five-paragraph field order. A complete campaign plan will identify the assumptions upon which the planning is based and will identify and isolate those strategic objectives that the plan is to accomplish. As in the field order, the mission will be clearly stated and a plan of maneuver generally will be included. The campaign will be phased and the plan itself will include the allocation of the available combat support, the identification and allocation of combat resources available, a detailing of logistical considerations and limitations, and a deception plan to help guarantee success. All of these elements are traditional ones visible in the campaign plans of the past. The theater campaign plan should not be voluminous. General MacArthur's plan for his theater of operations in the Pacific was only four pages long. While brevity and mission-type guidance are desired, however, the plan must be complete enough to convey clearly the commander's intent to his subordinates.

The overall objective of the campaign plan must be the accomplishment of the assigned strategic objectives. In our current

system the unified commander, i.e. the theater commander, obtains his strategic objectives from the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, and based on these assigned strategic objectives, he will devise a theater strategy to achieve them. The campaign plan is the mechanism by which the theater commander tells his subordinate commands how he intends to accomplish the objectives. It is also the mechanism by which tasks are assigned, and it will make clear how each of these tasks contributes to the overall plan. At the theater level, the campaign plan will generally be a joint campaign plan, since in modern war a single-service force is usually insufficient to achieve a national strategic objective. The theater subordinate commands, normally the component commanders, will prepare supporting campaign plans to express in somewhat more detail how their forces will contribute to the achievement of the objectives in the theater campaign plan. In most theaters there will be an air-land campaign and a separate air campaign. Depending on the situation in the theater, there may or may not be a supporting naval campaign. While it is theoretically possible to have a unilateral land campaign, US forces, by doctrine and experience, normally will not be committed without air support. That a unilateral land campaign is possible has been amply demonstrated by forces of other nations. The North Vietnamese, for example, committed their forces in a pure land campaign.

One of the distinguishing features of a campaign plan is that because of the expected length of the campaign, it is generally phased. The first phase, the phase that details the strategic concentration of forces for the battles to follow, normally will be prepared in great detail, but subsequent phases will be less and less clearly defined as the number of unknowns increases. The final phase, however, the phase that details the military situation that must be achieved to obtain the final objective, should be well developed. This requirement to visualize how the conflict in the theater will end, what the final disposition of forces will be, is a reflection of the paramount responsibility of the campaign

planner—the requirement to insure that the battles achieve the assigned strategic objectives. If this step is not taken, or is taken incorrectly, disaster may follow. The campaign planner must keep his thoughts, and his forces, oriented on the final objective. The ability to phase a campaign plan is an example of the art component at the operational level. Normally, a campaign plan will change phases when the planned tempo or type of operations changes, when the operations planned call for a reallocation of resources, or when the logistical requirements change.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of logistics at the operational level. At this level, especially in modern wars, logistics often will be the key consideration of all plans. To a large degree, logistics defines operations at the operational level. A campaign plan that cannot be logistically supported is not a plan at all, but simply an expression of fanciful wishes. The campaign plan, and the phasing of that plan, must allow for logistical restrictions as they exist and provide the time and resources for the logistical structure to be emplaced.

While a focus on the strategic objective is a mandatory perspective for the campaign, care must also be taken in articulating the assumptions upon which the plan is based. As is true in any planning process, if the campaign plan is based on invalid assumptions, then the plan itself can have no validity. Because the assumptions upon which the campaign plan is based may change, because the conditions that led to the adoption of those assumptions may also change over time, and because the enemy's response may invalidate the original plan, the campaign plan must be prepared with branches and sequels, as discussed in FM 100-5.<sup>12</sup> As one experienced campaign planner, Napoleon, noted, "A plan of campaign should anticipate everything the enemy can do."<sup>13</sup> As assumptions become invalid, as enemy activity and the friction of war change the conditions upon which the original plan was based, the competent planner will have available hip-pocket variants to compensate for these changes.

Since the essence of operational art and the campaign plan is a matter of focus—demanding a theater perspective—then a corollary is the requirement that the elements of the plan directly contribute to the assigned objective. In current terminology this concept is expressed by such words as integration, coordination, harmonization, and synchronization, but all convey the same thought. All available forces must be orchestrated so that they directly contribute to achieving the objective. As will have become obvious, this emphasis on focus is really nothing more than stressing one of the principles of war—the principle of the objective.

### PRINCIPLES

Jomini observed that “success in war results from the application of sound principles.”<sup>14</sup> The problem, of course, is to know what those sound principles are and how to apply them. While none perhaps should be accepted as valid for all time and in all conditions, certain principles have stood the test of time and should not be knowingly violated. Our doctrinal acceptance of the principles of war has varied over time, but fortunately the current version of FM 100-5 again recognizes them. They are *principles* of war, not rules. As convincing testimony to their importance, we should note their origins in the distilled thoughts on the conduct of war by the Great Captains of military history. Jomini articulated the principle that a commander “should utilize strategic maneuver to bring the greatest mass of forces into a defined area in a coordinated effort upon a decisive point.”<sup>15</sup> General Glenn Otis’s statement that “the primary purpose of the operational level is to gain positional advantage over the enemy” is so closely related to both Jomini’s view and the principle of mass that a commander will ignore it only at his peril.<sup>16</sup> This concept has stood the test of time, as have others.

Knowing which principles are decisive at a particular time is part of the art of war. As discussed previously, the operational level of war consists of two component parts—the art and the science. Most of us are fairly comfortable with the science component, as

science can be more easily taught. Books can be written, doctrine developed, and techniques taught that enable us to master the science of the operational level, and that is where our service schools have placed their concentration. The art component causes us more intellectual difficulty. Trained in a tactical environment where the science of war is predominant, we become uncomfortable when facing the intangibles of the art component at the operational level. Art cannot be mastered through rote learning; it is available for study and reflection, but it is not subject to codification. Increasingly, the senior service schools are stressing the art component, and much of this study can only be accomplished through a study of history, by examining the campaigns of the past and grasping why they were successful or why they failed. As an anonymous writer noted, “Military history becomes the laboratory of the military mind. In its pages one will find suggestions which make for qualities of greatness or mediocrity in the military leader.”<sup>17</sup> The military professional will study these lessons. The Great Captains of the future will be those who can correctly apply these lessons to their existing circumstances.

The addition of the concept of an operational level has been a major development regarding our ability to conceptualize war. The perspectives that follow—the recognition of the objectives-strategy-concepts-resources sequence, the recognition that tactical activities have utility only as they contribute to the achievement of operational objectives, and the recognition that the four elements of power are present at all three levels—provide a significant reorientation of our view of war. With the acceptance of the operational level, the campaign plan, with its phased sequencing of battles to achieve a theater strategic objective, once again has clear utility. We have been slow to learn that the sum of tactical successes does not equal the satisfactory conclusion of a war and that in the absence of an operational-level focus, and a clearly defined war-termination goal, these tactical successes may contribute little. The campaign plan must orchestrate operations and battles, and the other elements of

power; it is through the campaign plan that a commander makes clear his intent from the opening stages to the successful conclusion of the conflict within his theater.

#### NOTES

1. FM 100-5 clearly considers AirLand Battle to be both a tactical- and an operational-level doctrine. Throughout the manual the doctrine is referred to as a "how to fight" doctrine. The premise of this article is that the claim for AirLand Battle to be an operational-level doctrine rests on a misinterpretation of the meaning of the operational level of war. Conversely, NATO's Follow-on-Forces Attack is an operational-level doctrine.

2. US Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual 100-5 (Washington: GPO, August 1982), p. 2.

3. US Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual 100-5 (Washington: GPO, May 1986), p. 10.

4. While not normally addressed in military terminology, each of the elements of power also has its strategic, operational, and tactical applications. If, within the military element of power, theater objectives are required to support the national strategy, then theater psychological (and political and economic) objectives also are required.

5. Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982).

6. US Army War College, *Carl von Clausewitz: Two Letters on Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: USAWC, November 1984), p. 11.

7. Jay Luvaas, ed. and trans., "Frederick the Great: On the Art of War," reprinted in US Army War College, *Operational Level of War—Its Art* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: USAWC, 1985), p. 1-2.

8. The new (1986) version of FM 100-5 again makes reference to the term "theater of operations."

9. Brian J. Fugate, *Operation Barbarossa* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1984), p. 59.

10. The concept of the center of gravity exists at all three levels of war. At the strategic and operational levels the phrase itself is in common usage; at the tactical level, other phrases, such as key terrain, are used to express the concept.

11. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), p. 619.

12. FM 100-5 (1986 edition), p. 30.

13. *Operational Level of War—Its Art*, p. 1-2.

14. US Military Academy, *Jomini, Clausewitz and Schlieffen* (West Point, N.Y.: USMA, 1954), p. 3.

15. In the context Jomini uses the phrase "strategic maneuver," it is clear that in present-day terminology he is referring to "operational maneuver."

16. Glenn K. Otis, "Perspectives of War," reprinted in US Army War College, *Planning—Volume III*, reference text (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: USAWC, 1984), p. 1-2.

17. US Military Academy, *Great Captains Before Napoleon* (West Point, N.Y.: USMA, 1955), p. 1.



# EXPLORING THE OPERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

by

CLAYTON R. NEWELL

**M**ilitary historian Michael Howard once observed, "A soldier in peacetime is like a sailor navigating by dead reckoning. You have left the terra firma of the last war and are extrapolating from the experiences of that war." Today the US Army is extrapolating not only from its last war, but from its collective wartime history. It is seeking to understand a part of war that has not been a part of its recent experience.

In World War II the Army effectively maneuvered field armies and army groups on the battlefield in vast joint and combined operations. In Korea the Army had a field army operating as a part of the combined United Nations force. Since our Korean experience, however, in consonance with national policy, the Army has not had occasion to conduct operations of comparable size.

The focus since shortly after World War II has been on limited wars where large conventional armed forces were not considered necessary because strategic nuclear forces could be used in place of them. Vietnam, our most recent large-scale combat experience, was almost exclusively a tactical war. Even though that may have been "irrelevant" to the outcome of the war, it has had a profound effect on the Army's doctrine.<sup>2</sup> As a result of the shift in focus between World War II and Vietnam, the Army lost sight of how to fight that level of war lying between tactics and strategy. Today's officer corps has had no opportunity to gain practical combat experience at a higher level than the tactical.

Since World War II nuclear weapons have dominated strategic planning, and until recently the Army concentrated its doctrine almost exclusively on tactical techniques. Consequently, the practical experience of the present officer corps has been limited to tactics, while its intellectual experience has been strategic. Moreover, the strategic nuclear theorizing has been the province of the nonmilitary intellectual rather than the serving Army officer.<sup>3</sup>

It should not be surprising, then, that the practical experience of the doctrine writers should have influenced their work. The resulting focus on tactics emerged in 1976 when the Army revised its keystone doctrinal manual, FM 100-5, *Operations*, which emphasized the active defense, an essentially tactical concept. That edition of FM 100-5 gave virtually no consideration to the activities that translate strategic goals into the military conditions necessary to exploit tactical success.

The 1982 edition of FM 100-5, however, did introduce these operational considerations to the Army. The 1982 doctrine recognized that the officer corps needed to understand how to translate strategic goals into military operations. It therefore introduced the idea of levels of war, each with its own perspective. The operational level of war, a new term to most of the Army, was applied to the level lying between strategy and tactics.<sup>4</sup>

Since 1982 the debate and discussion about the operational perspective has at least sensitized the Army to the idea that the

structure of war includes more than just tactics and strategy. With the 1986 version of FM 100-5 now upon the scene, the doctrine provides a more comprehensive approach to war and its various perspectives. Though debating about doctrine will surely continue, it is a healthy process; the Army continues to learn from the resultant discussion. The purpose of this article is to help further that discussion by exploring the operational perspective.

**A**lthough FM 100-5 contains the doctrine by which the Army fights, it is FM 100-1, *The Army*, which contains "the fundamental principles governing employment of United States Army forces in support of national objectives of the United States."<sup>5</sup> It further recognizes that clashes between military forces are only part of the broader framework of war, which includes "political, economic, psychological, technological, and diplomatic means" to achieve national policy objectives.<sup>6</sup> This broader framework is important to understanding the operational perspective and how it differs from the strategic and tactical perspectives.

The 1986 edition of FM 100-5 introduces these perspectives by stating that "war is a national undertaking which must be coordinated from the highest levels of policy-making to the basic levels of execution. Military strategy, operational art, and tactics are the broad divisions of activity in preparing for and conducting war."<sup>7</sup> Although these perspectives on waging war differ, they share the common concerns of ends, ways, and means. Army officers operating from any of the three perspectives will be concerned with what they are to do (ends), how they are to do it (ways), and what they have to do it with (means). The perspectives differ in the scope of these concerns, not in command level or force size.

The nation conducts war with a strategic perspective. Use of military force is guided by national strategy which sets the conditions for military operations. For the United States, national strategy establishes global priorities for the political, economic, psychological, technological, and diplomatic means

it uses to attain its own purposes or to frustrate those of an adversary. National strategy also determines how and when to use the elements of power to secure national objectives. Military strategy is but one element of power in the national strategy.

FM 100-5 defines military strategy as "the art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation or alliance to secure policy objectives by the application or threat of force."<sup>8</sup> It is important that both the military and civilian leadership at the national level understand the nature of war and what they hope to accomplish when they elect to use it as an instrument of national policy. The strategic military objectives they establish will define the shape of the war. The ends they establish determine the ways and means required to achieve those ends. In this context it is useful to recall Clausewitz's admonition that "no one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."<sup>9</sup> A more recent authority with practical experience on how the United States conducts war, General Bruce Palmer, Jr., has written that "it is Washington's responsibility to see that ends and means are kept in balance—that the strategic objectives under the strategic concept adopted are achievable with the forces and other resources expected to be available."<sup>10</sup>

Tactics is at the opposite end of the structure of war. Turning again to FM 100-5, we read that "tactics is the art by which corps and smaller unit commanders translate

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potential combat power into victorious battles and engagements."<sup>11</sup> Tactics is the doctrinal application of fire and movement. Units continually practice tactical techniques in peacetime in order to execute them automatically in combat. The tactical perspective is purely, or as purely as one can get, military in nature. It is also relatively easy to learn because it is basically a series of fixed drills to be executed under specified circumstances. The Army's officer corps is well versed in tactics, so well versed that there is often the temptation to apply tactical techniques to the operational and even the strategic levels.

The lead author of the 1982 edition of FM 100-5, the manual which introduced the operational level of war to the current generation of Army officers, wanted to "stimulate fresh discussions of . . . operational thinking in the field, in the service schools, and outside the Army."<sup>12</sup> The debate over Army doctrine which continues today both within and outside the Army is evidence of his success. The 1986 edition of FM 100-5, a logical evolution of the 1982 edition, describes the operational art as "the employment of available military forces to attain strategic goals within a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations."<sup>13</sup> This description is essentially unchanged from 1982, although the phrase "theory of large unit operations" has been properly eliminated.<sup>14</sup> The 1986 edition is a course correction applied to Army doctrine by the sailor in Michael Howard's analogy. The 1986 course correction considers experience with the doctrine since 1982, but it makes no radical changes in direction.

Even though the terms "operational level" and "operational art" may have been new to many readers in 1982, they are not new now. The Army's officer corps continues to develop its operational perspective through analysis and study even though it has not had the opportunity to experience it on the battlefield.

To understand the operational perspective, war is best viewed from the top down, even though our tactical instinct may

be to look from the battlefield up because that is where our wartime experience has been. The requirement to fight on the battlefield, however, ultimately originates with the National Command Authority, which, through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, provides direction to the theater commander, usually a unified commander in chief (CINC). This direction is in the form of strategic military objectives. It will also include the bounds within which the CINC will be allowed to conduct military operations. It may also include information about other elements of national power which will be employed in conjunction with military power to attain the desired national policy objectives. The CINC, an operational commander, must consider all relevant parts of the national strategy as he pursues the designated strategic objectives. Although he is the military commander, he does not have the relative luxury of a tactical commander, who works in a nearly pure military environment.

The CINC provides direction to the air, land, and sea components of his command. As FM 100-1 and FM 100-5 both stipulate, the Army expects to fight as part of both joint and combined forces. The operational perspective is not intrinsically a function of type, size, or organization of forces; it is, rather, a function of the strategic objectives in a theater of war or theater of operations. The operational perspective transcends single-service operations. It is both joint and combined. Although the Army concentrates on continental or land operations, its officer corps must have an operational perspective which includes any air, sea, or allied forces participating in the campaign. Here is how FM 100-5 correlates the three levels of war with particular echelons of command:

Operational art is the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations . . . . No particular echelon of command is solely or uniquely concerned with the operational art, but theater commanders and their chief subordinates usually

plan and direct campaigns. Army groups and armies normally design the major ground operations of a campaign. And corps and divisions normally execute those major ground operations . . . . While operational art sets the objectives and pattern of military activities, tactics is the art by which corps and smaller unit commanders translate potential combat power into victorious battles and engagements.<sup>15</sup>

The operational perspective involves both planning and executing campaigns. Campaigns aim to defeat the enemy or destroy his will to wage war. They take place in a specified time and space and may include both simultaneous and sequential battles. Results of the battles fought with a tactical perspective influence the campaigns designed with an operational perspective, and the results of those campaigns influence the war conducted with a strategic perspective. Conversely, strategic decisions in the form of strategic objectives guide operational actions, which in turn establish objectives for tactical actions.

The theater of war commander looks at both the strategic and operational perspectives and must also have an appreciation for the tactical. In a large theater of war with subordinate theaters of operations, the theater of operations commander will focus primarily on the operational perspective. Commands immediately subordinate to the theater commander work with both operational and tactical perspectives, but their primary focus is tactical. Although the strategic, operational, and tactical perspectives each have different characteristics, there are no clear-cut lines between them. Of the three, the operational perspective is perhaps the most ambiguous because it merges into tactics on the one hand and strategy on the other.

**T**he operational commander orchestrates his forces with the aid of a campaign plan to gain an advantage over the enemy. He anticipates opportunities to disrupt the enemy's decision-making process

and to force him into making mistakes. The commander with an operational perspective incorporates land, sea, and air forces into his campaign plan. His operational concept endeavors to create the conditions and establish the time and place for his tactical forces to fight a decisive action.

Planning for the campaign begins when the operational commander, generally the theater CINC, receives his strategic guidance. After a mission analysis to determine what he must do and an examination of available resources, the commander develops his concept of the operation. He visualizes the campaign unfolding to achieve the assigned strategic objectives. The operational commander does not fight battles. Rather, he maneuvers the forces under his control to have them in position so the tactical commanders can fight the battles which will contribute to the success of the campaign.

If adequate forces or resources are not immediately available to the operational commander to carry out his entire campaign, he may establish intermediate objectives short of the final strategic goals, incorporating his awareness of the resource shortfall in a phased campaign plan. This will allow him to make progress toward the strategic objectives while he marshals sufficient capability to eventually achieve his objectives. The operational commander also uses his campaign plan to identify future requirements to the strategic planners who are able to coordinate national capabilities to acquire the needed forces and resources.

In developing his campaign plan, the operational commander must remember that he will have to contend with the ever-present fog of war, with imperfect intelligence on the enemy, and with incomplete information on friendly forces once the campaign starts. Although planning is important, the operational commander must be prepared to change his plan in the midst of the campaign if the enemy provides him an opportunity to strike an unanticipated decisive blow. He must use his professional judgment, intuition, and instincts to anticipate and disrupt the intentions of his opponent and avoid being tied to an inflexible plan.

One of the greatest challenges to the operational commander is planning for the best use of time. Generally, an expeditiously conducted campaign is better. The advantageous use of time, however, is generally contingent on the use of available space. The idea of trading space for time applies at the operational level when space is available, although retention of space may well be part of the guidance the National Command Authority sets for the operational commander.

Although there are certainly differences in the tactical and operational perspectives, tactical experience in combat prepares the operational commander to deal with what Clausewitz called "the friction of war"—the force on the battlefield that makes the simplest things difficult.<sup>16</sup> Not only must the operational commander be able to deviate from his plan when opportunity knocks, he must remember Robert Burns' lament that "the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley."<sup>17</sup>

When considering time and space problems from an operational perspective, overcoming friction and simply bringing forces to bear faster than an opponent are not necessarily sufficient conditions for success. The forces must have adequate weight, and they must be directed toward disruption of the enemy's center of gravity, one of three theoretical concepts included in the 1986 edition of FM 100-5. These three concepts, center of gravity, line of operation, and culminating point, provide a link with the classical military thought which provides the foundation for our current doctrine.

FM 100-5 describes center of gravity as the "characteristic, capability, or locality from which the force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight."<sup>18</sup> Although this idea applies to the strategic and tactical perspectives as well as the operational, it is most useful at the operational level, where the size and scale of forces involved make it difficult to ascertain how best to attack an enemy. An operational commander, by seeking the enemy's center of gravity, increases his chance of success at a relatively low cost to friendly forces. Rather

than continually hammering force against force, the commander can apply the concept to concentrate his strength against an enemy vulnerability. According to FM 100-5, this is the essence of the operational art.<sup>19</sup>

A line of operation is "the directional orientation of a force in relation to the enemy."<sup>20</sup> Its purpose is to connect a base of operations with the objective of a campaign. During the planning phase a line of operation provides a prospective roadway for both combat and logistical operations during the campaign, although during the execution phase the commander must not allow himself to become so attached to this line that he will not deviate from it to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities. A danger with this concept is that unimaginative commanders may employ it mechanistically in their campaigning, an approach that is neither realistic nor particularly helpful.

The third concept in FM 100-5 is the culminating point, a point in time "where the strength of the attacker no longer significantly exceeds that of the defender, and beyond which continued offensive operations therefore risk overextension, counterattack, and defeat."<sup>21</sup> Attackers who attempt to continue beyond their culminating point court disaster; defenders who launch their counterattack after the attacker has made that error enjoy the potential for great success. The operational commander considers available resources in planning an attack, so that the concept of the culminating point includes consideration of logistics. Inadequate logistics can easily cause an attack to reach its culminating point too soon. In the defense, it is the operational commander who must maintain adequate resources to react when he senses the enemy attack has reached its culminating point. Although far from being precisely predictable, the culminating point is nonetheless real.

These three concepts apply to the strategic, operational, and tactical perspectives, and to both enemy and friendly forces. Just as the operational commander must consider them in the execution of his campaign plan, he must not forget that the

skillful enemy will consider them too in opposing the operational commander's campaign. Such an enemy will seek the opportunity to unbalance the hostile center of gravity, disrupt a threatening line of operation, or exploit an attack pushed beyond its culminating point. These three concepts, included for the first time in the 1986 edition of FM 100-5, represent a significant evolution of Army doctrine since 1976, when the emphasis was on tactical mechanisms portrayed in terms of relative firepower ratios.<sup>22</sup> Inclusion of these new ideas, which pertain especially to the operational perspective, illustrate progress toward "less need for cookbook formulas," a premise espoused by the authors of the 1982 edition of FM 100-5.<sup>23</sup>

**T**he trend away from narrow cookbook formulas to more general principles and concepts introduces a struggle between structure and creativity. As one progresses from the tactical to the operational perspectives, the tension between the security of structure and the risk of creativity increases. Tactical commanders can take refuge in well-rehearsed techniques in closing with the enemy. Operational commanders, on the other hand, must be prepared to take risks as they attempt to create the military conditions for a successful campaign. Even though risk is inherent in war, operational commanders can reduce it with a clearly communicated concept of operation and with simple plans.

In our search for simplicity, however, there is a temptation to succumb to the lure of checklists to insure that commanders do all that is necessary to assure success. Lists somehow seem to make war more scientific. The issue becomes one of distinguishing between art and science. In this age of high-tech weaponry, it is especially difficult to accept the idea that war can have an artistic side. After all, art creates; war destroys. But from what we know about creativity, it is apparent that many outstanding military leaders have been successful because they had an imaginative approach to war. They possessed a dynamic creativity founded on

their intuition about what was happening on the battlefield.<sup>24</sup>

The creative military mind must overcome the linear and sequential thinking which exists in the Army today. Army culture inhibits creative thinking because the military is historically slow to make the transition to new technology, has a low tolerance for conflicting opinions, discourages taking risks, insists on traditions of conformity, and demands strict obedience.<sup>25</sup> Although there are sound arguments for the existence of these tendencies, they nonetheless discourage creativity, an essential element of the operational perspective. Such a perspective contains what Napoleon referred to as a "spark of inspiration."<sup>26</sup> This spark is what allows successful operational commanders to jump ahead of their opponents to take advantage of events only dimly seen in the fog of war. The latest edition of FM 100-5 is moving the Army toward a better understanding of the intangible dynamics of the battlefield. As "the Army's principal tool of professional self-education in the science and art of war," it opens the door to studying the art of war wider than our fascination with technology has recently allowed.<sup>27</sup>

#### NOTES

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6. Field Manual 100-1, p. 7.

7. Field Manual 100-5, 1986 edition, p. 9.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), p. 579.

10. Bruce Palmer, Jr., *The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1984), p. 45.

11. Field Manual 100-5, 1986 edition, p. 10.

12. Huba Wass de Czege, "Toward a New American Approach to Warfare," *Art of War Quarterly*, 2 (September 1983), 52. Colonel Wass de Czege is identified as the lead author of FM 100-5 by John L. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine 1973-1982* (Fort Monroe, Va.: US Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1984), p. 43.

13. Field Manual 100-5, 1986 edition, p. 10.

14. Field Manual 100-5, 1982 edition, p. 2-3.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

16. Clausewitz, p. 121.

17. Robert Burns, "To a Mouse," 1785. "Gang aft agley" means to go off the planned line.

18. Field Manual 100-5, 1986 edition, p. 179.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 181.

22. Field Manual 100-5, 1976 edition, chap. 2, "Modern Weapons on the Modern Battlefield," especially emphasizes the tactical technological lethality and sets the tactical tone for the entire manual.

23. Wass de Czege, p. 56.

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26. Quoted in Mrazek, p. 31.

27. Field Manual 100-5, 1986 edition, p. i.



# SOVIET STRATEGIES FOR MILITARY COMPETITION

by

JOHN G. HINES and GEORGE F. KRAUS

There are indications that the Soviets may be assessing their prospects for the long-term competition rather pessimistically. They seem to see in recent US behavior (the Strategic Defense Initiative, stealth technology, high-tech conventional weaponry) both the threat of revolutionary improvements in technology and also an eagerness to exploit those improvements. Because they see no really effective unilateral options for countering these developments, they probably feel that their goals of increasing control over the competition and prevailing in the long term are now in more jeopardy than has been the case for several years.

One option, and certainly one element of the Soviets' response, is *direct head-to-head competition*. But the Soviets know that they are hampered by their incremental approach to force development and by the inefficiency with which they introduce innovations (even when they acquire the requisite technology). They will probably continue to have confidence in their ability to build few-of-a-kind, high-technology components. While this capability can be quite helpful, it cannot begin to meet the Western challenge posed by the widespread use of such components in deployed, operating forces.

Moreover, such direct technological competition would place a considerable burden on the economy as a whole at a time when the civilian machine industry and agriculture need massive infusions of technology and the scarce, highly skilled technical experts who can apply it. Some in the Soviet leadership are apparently concerned that a

competition-induced diversion of resources now to the military-technical sector might seriously undermine technological development in nonmilitary sectors. As a result, moderate short-term gains in military competition could result in long-term losses brought on by a seriously neglected technological infrastructure in the economy as a whole (i.e. not just "guns vs. butter," but "guns now vs. guns later" as well).

A second alternative may be increasingly to rely, in the event of war, on *preemptive massive use of nuclear weapons* to neutralize or greatly reduce the effect of the US technological advantage. The Soviets could make rhetorical use of this option, if needed, as we have seen them do in the past. But acceptance of this as the primary alternative would constitute a major failure of Soviet policy, since the Soviets have been seeking for years to develop a strategy and a force structure that would expand their choices in the event of crisis or war, while limiting the options available to the enemy. They would strongly resist being backed into a nuclear corner by US superiority in C<sup>3</sup>I and weapons technology. Moreover, advances in US launch detection capability might greatly lower the Soviet estimate of the likelihood of success of a preemptive launch.

A third alternative is essentially to do more of the same, but more effectively. That is to say, they could continue to try to compensate for technological inferiority with *superiority of numbers and mass* and with combinations of inferior technologies in various development and employment schemes. Of the choices open to Soviet

planners, this is probably the least unsatisfactory although certainly inadequate to meet their long-term goal of establishing and maintaining overall military superiority vis-à-vis the West. Soviet planners may even be concerned that these measures will not be sufficient to meet what may be an intermediate objective of not falling behind militarily while they try to catch up with the West in the nonmilitary sector of industry.

The Soviets would hope to compensate for the inadequacies of the "more-of-the-same" alternative with a *long-term political strategy of detente and negotiation* designed to preclude full realization by Western powers of their potential advantage in military-technical competition. The Soviets believe that detente undermines the Western public's will to compete, thereby preventing their governments from taking full advantage of the military potential of technological superiority. (Their experience with the ABM treaty reinforces this approach.) Moreover, the Soviets have come to the conclusion that under conditions of detente, Western technology and, perhaps more important, technical know-how (bringing technology from research and development into production and application) become more readily available to the Soviets. This helps Soviet military programs both directly, through incorporation into military hardware, and indirectly, by enriching the technology base and productivity of the economy for subsequent exploitation by the military sector. In addition, as the Soviets see

it, detente creates an environment in which the Soviets can continue to compete politically and militarily "on the margin" for the allegiance and support of states in the process of "national liberation," thereby expanding their opportunities for military basing and creating the impression of a Red shift in the worldwide "correlation of forces." The Soviets would probably prefer to avoid a long-term policy of overall vigorous confrontation unless they are severely threatened by a major military technological breakthrough by the West (comparable in scale, perhaps, to US nuclear superiority in the 1950s) or by extremely threatening Western behavior.

If this assessment is correct, the Soviets will be alert to exploit opportunities to "recapture" detente even in the face of ambiguous or somewhat negative signals from the United States. In the military sector the Soviets are likely to make a very strong effort to prevent US investment in space weaponry, even if it means making somewhat radical compromises in other areas, such as global or theater offensive weapons. The Soviets apparently believe that vigorous US programs in space weapons (anti-satellite [ASAT] and the broader SDI) could open a gap in strategic military competition comparable perhaps to that which existed twenty years ago. The Soviets will pursue energetically their own, probably somewhat different, approach to space warfare, of course, but they can have little assurance of success in the face of US advantages in signal

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processing, microelectronics, and other sophisticated technologies.

The outlines of the Soviet approach now seem to be emerging. US negligence of heavy-lift capability and manned orbital space research has given the Soviets a lead in these areas. Our continued failure to compete seriously in manned space programs will enable them to develop the manned space platforms and space transportation capability that later could be turned to direct military application with little modification. A large manned Soviet presence in orbital space would then facilitate Soviet research and development of a simpler, but perhaps no less effective, "man-in-the-loop," total-system solution to the problem of space warfare in anticipation of US weapons that might be individually superior. The US manned space program, if funded, will lag behind that of the Soviet Union for some time and, in any case, probably will not be anywhere near as important to our future space weapons program as the Soviet manned program would be to theirs. In seeking to prevent competition in space weaponry now, the Soviets are trying very hard to buy the time they need to develop the infrastructure in space that *they* would require to at least hold their own. Even if they should sign a treaty prohibiting weapons in space, they would continue research and development on weapons compatible with their future orbital systems, since Soviet military and political leaders are necessarily convinced that in the long term the continued struggle for military domination of space is a historical inevitability.

This assessment suggests that the United States probably has available important opportunities in long-term strategic competition with the Soviets. The way in which we approach this competition, however, may seriously interfere with our ability to fully exploit our advantage. For while there are many areas in which we could break out technologically and outflank the Soviets, we are in danger of losing our edge, if not the competition, because we have been outflanked in the area of strategic and operational thinking. Our focus on hardware development and hardware competition in

the absence of any long-term comprehensive plan for employment not only inhibits our own strategy development, but also our ability to discern the strategies of an opponent who is unaccustomed to thinking about weapons and technological competition outside the full operational context in which they would be used.

This is an important perceptual limitation on our part because the Soviets tend to rely on the synergism achieved by combining technologically inferior weapons in somewhat elaborate strategic schemes to offset or overcome Western technological superiority in specific weapon systems. In the last two decades this practice has been extended and refined in what the Soviets call the "systems approach" to operations and force development. While Western defense planners normally apply the term "system" somewhat narrowly to a specific weapon and its ancillary equipment, Soviet military planners use the term to describe all the elements required to achieve a given objective. This includes the forces, the hardware, the C'I and logistics, and the *operational plan to include timing* by which all of these components are to be brought to bear to achieve the given objective. This leads to establishment of a hierarchy of long-term objectives served by a hierarchically organized set of interrelated operational subsystems.

This perspective leads the Soviet planner to view both Soviet and opposing forces as systems and to look for systemic strengths and weaknesses on both sides. In a peacetime planning environment such analysis helps him to develop operational plans for future conflict that will take maximum advantage of his own future strengths and forecasted enemy shortcomings. This, in turn, guides Soviet force development and long-term deception in ways that will maximize the effectiveness of Soviet operational planning for future conflict. The product of this process is almost always surprising for Western planners because the Soviet systemic approach is not recognized for what it is and the Soviet response to a given type of superior Western hardware is rarely, if ever, predominantly a race to develop even better Soviet hardware of the same type.



Several examples of US misinterpretations of Soviet competitive behavior can be drawn from past and present experience. Two examples, one strategic, the other theater-related, should be sufficient to illustrate the point.

With regard to strategic forces, the Soviets used the extended range (4900 nautical miles) of the Delta SSBN/SS-N-8 missile system (nuclear missiles launched from submarines), in effect, to defend better their seaborne strategic nuclear forces against superior US antisubmarine warfare (ASW) capability—all in behalf of the larger objective of enhancing the security of their strategic nuclear reserve. They achieved this not by deploying the longer-range subs in large expanses of ocean where superior US ASW could be brought to bear more easily. They used the capability, instead, to hide the SSBNs under or near arctic ice near the Soviet Union and thereby greatly complicate their detection and destruction by three of the four major components of the US ASW system—air- and surface-based ASW platforms, and the SOSUS (sound surveillance systems) fixed surveillance sensors. Protection against the fourth threat, US SSNs (nuclear attack submarines), was provided by integration of the Delta SSBN into a system of defenses comprised of Soviet SSNs, ASW surface ships, land-based ASW aircraft, and land- and sea-based air defenses. The Soviets advanced toward the objective of improved security of their strategic nuclear reserve in a systemic way by integrating enhanced offensive capabilities (the SS-N-8/Delta) into a defensive capability that was largely already in existence. It is almost certain that this was the intended Soviet deployment scheme all along. It should be noted that the extended range of the SS-N-8 was made possible by Soviet superiority in an "inferior" liquid missile fuel technology which the United States had abandoned earlier in favor of solid fuel. (The United States did not deploy sea-launched ballistic missiles [SLBMs] of comparable range for another decade.)

The US appreciation of this change was narrow, weapons-oriented, and mirror-imaged: the Soviets had a long-range, sea-based missile and they would probably use

the capability to hide in the world's oceans (as would the US Navy). This perception inhibited understanding of the overall effect of the Soviet achievement and retarded development of effective countermeasures against SSBNs hidden under arctic ice.

In the theater case, it was evident to the Soviets in the mid-1960s that in the event of war in Europe, NATO superiority in tactical air would seriously threaten the success of the Soviet offensive. The Soviet response was development of the theater air operation which brings together conventionally armed theater missiles, artillery, special purpose forces, airborne and air assault troops, and electronic warfare, as well as tactical, strategic, and in some instances naval aviation. These forces, under a single commander, are to execute an integrated plan for massive preemptive conventional strikes against superior NATO aircraft before they can be launched. The air operation seeks to make superior use of time (preemption and coordination) to solve the problem of the inferiority of Soviet pilots and aircraft against airborne NATO aircraft. The integration of surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs) into the air operation was critical to the success of the operation as a whole, since they could quickly and preemptively (from garrison, if necessary) disrupt NATO air defenses, airfields, and associated C<sup>3</sup>I centers, thereby buying time for inferior Warsaw Pact aircraft to neutralize or destroy these same targets. The Soviet response to superior NATO aircraft and pilots did not rely, therefore, on competitive development of superior Soviet aircraft and pilots, but on development of a system of relatively inferior subsystems, some of which were aircraft, which when used together in a well-timed operational scheme could effectively counter NATO superiority.

The US appreciation of the Soviet theater operation has been persistently incomplete, and this has led in turn to inadequate and inappropriate responses both in terms of force development and operational planning. We tend to expect a single type of weapons platform to solve an entire operational problem, and hence the level of perfection of that single platform type

against the standard of total mission accomplishment is how we measure our own progress as well as the probable effectiveness of the threat. Moreover, US analysts and operators make an almost exclusive association of missiles with nuclear delivery, and our own strict division of roles and missions among the services (tactical missiles—Army; tactical air—Air Force) greatly inhibits our thinking about a single major operation that closely integrates both capabilities. The close integration of additional elements, such as naval air and special purpose and airborne teams, is simply so foreign to our thinking that it is not understood in a way that is useful for developing a response.

The major purpose of citing these examples is to illustrate that important differences in the US and Soviet approaches to the development of strategy and forces (in terms of objectives, planning horizons, and operational combinations of means) can greatly inhibit US understanding of Soviet competitive behavior. This, in turn, can lead to inappropriate, sometimes costly, US responses that are as much the product of differences in general analytical frameworks as they are of active Soviet perception-manipulation efforts. The major differences are summarized in the accompanying chart.

The Soviets' negotiating strategy reflects and supports their goal-oriented, long-term approach to strategy development and strategic competition. In the negotiating process the Soviets seek to constrain us where we appear to have a technological advantage (ballistic missile defense, ASW, ASAT) and maintain their freedom of action in areas where they can do well (land mobility, hardening, manned space). More specifically, it is very likely that those reviewing and guiding negotiations have established a fairly complete hierarchy of force development objectives in terms of what post-agreement combinations of active and passive capabilities need to be able to do against the enemy in the context of certain types of operations. The requirements might change if the opponent gives up a capability and the Soviets may, in negotiating, trade off various weapons and means (e.g. ABM traded for

mobility and concealment) that help to support the same objective. The United States can be at a disadvantage when confronted with this behavior, since our negotiating approach reflects our way of thinking about developing strategy and forces. We tend to focus rather narrowly on weapons, on hardware, when it would be much more important for us to understand probable Soviet long-term and intermediate strategic objectives that might be served by various combinations of weapons and other capabilities, and to understand the most likely Soviet operational scenarios for employment of these capabilities in a future war. The resulting agreement should then be more likely to retard or confound the Soviets' achievement of their objectives rather than to limit the development or deployment of a particular kind of weapon, which may not greatly interfere with Soviet attainment of long-term goals.

To achieve this, US negotiators and others concerned with strategic competition probably need additional support from those who specialize in Soviet military affairs. Specifically, the most important task of the intelligence and defense analytical communities is to determine Soviet assessments and forecasts of the strategic competition and likely Soviet objectives in light of these assessments. They could then, perhaps, make more accurate assessments and forecasts of how various Soviet weapons and capabilities would be brought to bear to achieve the goals that have been determined or postulated. This should help, at least, to devise questions that would lead more directly to understanding Soviet strategies and the forces required to support them. The need for a broader approach of this kind becomes more urgent as we embark on a new round of competition and negotiations in which dramatic advances in weapon technology will be a major factor. This might help us to make more appropriate interpretations and generally better use of the somewhat narrowly framed technical-measure-and-countermeasure estimates that are coming out of the intelligence, academic, and defense contractor communities in ever-increasing volume.

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## Comparison of US and Soviet Frameworks for Development of Strategy and Forces

### SOVIET

- Optimize total system (strategy, forces, hardware directed toward established objective).
- Accept and compensate for suboptimal subsystems (weapons, weapon systems, operators).
- Competition/ Conflict is viewed as system vs. system.

### GENERAL

- Optimize subsystems (weapons, weapon operating activities).
- Concept of total, objective-directed system is undeveloped in defense planning.
- Competition/ Conflict is viewed as hardware vs. hardware.

(Resultant competition: Soviet system vs. US hardware)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Systemic strategic objectives serve clearly defined, long-term goals.</li><li>• Strategic planning is characterized by a hierarchy of strategic objectives served by a hierarchy of systemically interrelated strategies and substrategies.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long-term goals are unclear or too general to be meaningful.</li><li>• Objectives are often ill-defined and subject to frequent change (every 12 months to 2 years). A hierarchy of objectives is not clearly established and agreed upon.</li></ul> |
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### IMPLICATIONS FOR FORCE DEVELOPMENT

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Own and opponent's present and projected force postures are analyzed for total-systemic strengths and vulnerabilities. Force development supports a systemic response that exploits opponent's weaknesses and own strengths. Primary system response is almost never weapon-on-weapon or countermeasure-on-weapon, since the weapon being countered usually represents the opponent's strength. Response is typically a combination of different kinds of relatively inferior weapons in an operational strategy that exploits Soviet systemic advantages. (Well-established institutions such as the General Staff system, the VPK, and the combined-arms academies provide strong support for a systems view that tends to override administrative parochialism of the five services.)</li><li>• Weapons and C<sup>3</sup>I hardware are designed to perform as well as possible at a low level of technical risk rather than to perform the best that is technically possible at a high level of risk and uncertainty. The total system (forces brought to bear to achieve an objective) is designed to compensate for the safe, suboptimal subsystems through numbers, timing, special combinations, etc.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Own and opponent's defense postures are viewed as inventories of manned hardware sorted and assessed in categories that correspond to the institutional (programmatic) and analytical interests of the assessor (Army, Navy, Air Force, Defense, State, technical, political, etc.). Institutional fragmentation and narrow program orientation strongly inhibit thinking about responses in terms other than weapon-on-weapon or countermeasure-on-weapon. As a result, our own and opponent's total-system vulnerabilities are overlooked and may be unattended even when they are apparent because our programmatic responses would have to cut across several institutional boundaries. For the same reasons we often fail to see or to exploit our own systemic advantages.</li><li>• Weapons and other hardware are designed to perform as well as is technically possible. Risk is reduced through technical perfection rather than through compromise. Total system compensation for suboptimal hardware systems is not considered because of the absence of a total-system approach in strategic planning.</li></ul> |
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### DISADVANTAGES

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Soviet planners may erroneously see and build against a total systemic design in US weapons development and operations when no US total-system concept or strategy exists. This may lead to unnecessary or misplaced investment.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• US planners fail to see US and Soviet forces in a total-system perspective. Thus they fail to understand the most important characteristic of how the Soviets assess US force development, strategic planning, and strategic competition; and they fail to ask the right questions to discern Soviet strategies and force requirements.</li></ul> |
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# SOVIET USE OF SURROGATES TO PROJECT POWER INTO THE THIRD WORLD

by

RICHARD SHULTZ

**H**ow the Soviet Union employs various surrogates to promote its policy and influence in the Third World is a subject requiring much more analytic and scholarly examination than has taken place.<sup>1</sup> A comprehensive study of the many ways in which the USSR employs clients in the developing world would constitute a very ambitious undertaking. In order to narrow the scope of this complicated subject, I will address only two important aspects of Soviet policy and strategy in the developing world. The first focuses on whether and to what degree the USSR promotes what is now referred to as low-level or low-intensity violence, primarily insurgency and terrorism. The second examines Soviet assistance to newly established Marxist-Leninist regimes. It has been suggested by some Western specialists that the latter has as its objective the consolidation of power by pro-Moscow elements during the immediate post-revolutionary period. With respect to each of these policies, is there significant primary evidence pointing to Moscow's reliance on surrogate assets to help accomplish these purported foreign policy objectives?

## SURROGATES AND STRATEGY

Before examining these two aspects of Soviet policy in the Third World, it is first important to determine what we generally

know about surrogates. Of course, throughout history imperial regimes frequently have used others to project power and influence. For instance, in very early times the Romans used clients to fight various enemies. Furthermore, since the time of ancient Greece and Rome, states have employed mercenaries, whether they are individual soldiers of fortune or defeated troops looking for new causes, as instruments of power and influence. In more recent times the British used the Gurkhas and the French the Foreign Legion.

The Soviet Union, however, according to a number of specialists, appears to use surrogates in ways that differ markedly from earlier and even more contemporary times.<sup>2</sup> Their arguments, when taken together, point to important distinctions. For one, Soviet surrogates appear to be much more specialized in the tasks and missions they undertake. Further, Moscow's control seems to vary and depends on the ideological, political, geographical, and economic nature of the client state itself. And further, these proxies are apparently involved in an array of operations both in peace and in what has been called "twilight wars" or low-intensity conflicts.

How then has the Soviet Union promoted low-intensity violence in the Third World and assisted new Marxist-Leninist regimes? Clues that address these two aspects

of Moscow's surrogate policy can be found in the literature dealing with Soviet strategy and policy in the developing world.<sup>3</sup>

In the case of low-level violence, the literature suggests that Moscow employs both political and paramilitary instruments to promote instability, including guerrilla insurgency and terrorism. These political and paramilitary instruments are subsumed under the term "active measures."<sup>4</sup> In terms of support for insurgent and terrorist movements, both types of active measures appear important to achieving policy objectives. Political active measures, it is argued, are used to champion the cause and objectives of the insurgent movement in the international arena. The international acceptance both of the just cause of the insurgency and the repressive/immoral character of the incumbent regime can play an important role at each stage of the movement's development. The major Soviet techniques employed to promote insurgent causes include foreign propaganda, international front organizations, and what might be termed political action within the United Nations and other international or regional organizations.<sup>5</sup> The latter include the Organization of African Unity, the non-aligned movement, and the Socialist International. If political active measures seek to enhance the reputation of the insurgent movement internationally, paramilitary assistance, according to some Western specialists, seeks to improve their politico-military proficiency "on the ground."<sup>6</sup> Paramilitary assistance includes arms and logistical support, politico-military training, and advisory support. To what degree do Soviet surrogates perform each of these political and paramilitary tasks in support of Moscow's policy and strategy? Does evidence exist to support the notion that Soviet surrogates have become quite specialized and different proxies are involved in each of these varied tactics?

As noted earlier, a second important aspect of Soviet policy, according to some analysts, is directed toward assisting Leninist factions to consolidate power during the post-revolutionary period.<sup>7</sup> The Kremlin's objective, it is posited, is to give operational

meaning to the Brezhnev doctrine's assertion of the irreversibility of the world revolutionary process. The goal is to insure that regimes that come to power through Leninist means remain forever inviolate.<sup>8</sup> This is achieved through the development of an internal security infrastructure that can quell all internal opposition, mobilize the population, and insulate the leadership cadre. Additionally, to protect against a new form of internal threat that may challenge these newly established Leninist regimes—resistance movements employing insurgent strategies—the Soviet Union provides military and paramilitary advice and support.<sup>9</sup> As with the other aspect of Soviet policy discussed above, we are left with the question of whether and to what degree the Kremlin can call upon its surrogates to assist in these matters.

#### CASE STUDIES

While the concept of surrogates has become the subject of growing commentary, analytic rigor in assessing this aspect of Soviet strategy has been missing. In part, this has been due to a lack of primary documentation. However, in preparing this study I was able to draw upon a body of unique and only recently available primary materials. This material contains firsthand evidence of how the Soviets use surrogates in the Third World. The documents can be

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subdivided into two categories. The first of these is documentation in the form of arrangements and official agreements, either between terrorists or newly established Leninist regimes and the USSR and its various surrogates. These include materials from Grenada, Central America, southern Africa, and the Middle East.<sup>10</sup> They reveal the international infrastructure that Moscow and its surrogates employ. The second documentary category consists of testimony by former members of the states sponsoring terrorism and insurgency or the actual practitioners who conducted these operations "on the ground." This testimony is being collected through interviews with the individuals involved. The portion cited in the following pages is a small part of extensive debriefings of these former principals who have now come to live in the West.<sup>11</sup> What follows are three case studies revealing how Moscow employs surrogates in its Third World policy.

### The Caribbean

The documents captured in Grenada during the 1983 intervention by the United States and its eastern Caribbean allies reveal how the Soviets and their surrogates were deeply involved both in assisting the government of Maurice Bishop in consolidating power and in establishing an infrastructure from which terrorism and insurgency could be promoted in the region. In effect, the documents detail the steps taken to establish a surrogate of a Soviet surrogate, that is, a client of Moscow's own Cuban surrogate. It would appear that a quite similar situation currently exists in Nicaragua.

A number of the documents portray both the quality and quantity of military assistance received by Grenada from Moscow and its Eastern bloc, Cuban, Vietnamese, and North Korean proxies. The objective of this support was to assist the Bishop government in power consolidation. For instance, the transfer of Soviet arms to Grenada is described in two written agreements with the New Jewel Movement.<sup>12</sup> Signed in the early 1980s, these agreements cover the period

1981-1985 and demonstrate Moscow's willingness to underwrite Grenada's military buildup. This aid included outfitting a Grenadian force of 10,000 soldiers, sending Soviet military advisors and security specialists to Grenada, and dispatching Grenadian soldiers to the USSR for training. A secret Cuban-Grenadian agreement signed by Castro provided a contingent of Cuban military specialists for the purpose of training Grenadian soldiers.<sup>13</sup> Military scholarships also were made available to bring Grenadian personnel to Cuba. Interestingly, the document stressed that all measures should be taken to insure the secrecy of these agreements. Two other documents described an offer by the government of Vietnam to teach Grenadian officials about American battle tactics and weapons.<sup>14</sup> Hanoi also offered to assist Grenada in its power consolidation by training cadres in the "techniques of dealing with counterrevolutionaries and anti-social elements, especially in the area of re-education and methods of dealing with lumpen proletarian elements."

Arrangements to transfer arms from North Korea, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany are outlined. The agreement with North Korea, which was secret and signed by Bishop, included provision of coast guard vessels.<sup>15</sup> The Czechs, using Cuba as a transfer point, provided rifles, bazookas, grenade launchers, rocket warheads, and similar weapons. The agreement also suggested that the Grenadians make a similar arrangement with other Warsaw Pact states, including the Bulgarians.<sup>16</sup> In other words, one finds a Soviet surrogate directing Grenada to other Warsaw Pact outlets for acquiring military assistance. The agreement with East Germany, which was signed by Grenada's security chief, specified that the purpose of the equipment and supplies was to strengthen Grenadian security in "the struggle against enemies of the people." The ultimate goal was "to help strengthen the operative capacity of the security bodies of your country."<sup>17</sup> So it seems that the New Jewel Movement was clear on the system of government it intended to establish in Grenada.

In addition to military equipment, the Secretary of Defense and Interior, Hudson Austin, personally requested from Yuri Andropov (at that time head of the KGB) intelligence and counterintelligence training for Grenadian security cadres. He also acknowledged "the tremendous assistance which our armed forces received from your party and government."<sup>18</sup> Other documents reveal that Grenadians were to receive military training in Soviet and East European bloc schools.<sup>19</sup>

It would also appear that the Soviets and their surrogates were preparing Grenada to play a role in the international infrastructure used to promote the cause of "national liberation movements." For instance, in a Cuban-Grenadian Communist Party agreement, Havana offers to provide propaganda training for New Jewel Movement cadres and arranges to coordinate their strategy in international organizations and events, including the Socialist International.<sup>20</sup> The communication is between Hudson Austin and Manuel Pineiro, the chief of the Americas Department of the Cuban Communist Party. In many respects Pineiro is the equivalent of Boris Ponomarev, the head of the International Department of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). In a related communique Pineiro provides the New Jewel Movement with information on how to contact other communist party organizations across the globe, including illegal parties from Chile, Brazil, and Turkey. These could be reached through Cuban embassies in the Soviet Union, Portugal, and East Germany. A number of these parties were scheduled to take part in the Conference on Solidarity with Grenada which was being organized by Soviet front groups.<sup>21</sup>

The Cubans provided Grenada with a report on how to cultivate and manipulate church clergy. This included clergy in Grenada as well as the promotion of contacts with clergy from Nicaragua and other Latin American countries linked to the theology of liberation and committed to the revolutionary process.<sup>22</sup> This suggests that Grenada was being prepared to play a role in Soviet-Cuban

political warfare efforts in the Caribbean region.

In light of the documents described above, it would seem to be no exaggeration to suggest that Grenada was being groomed for a surrogate role. This was, however, a role that they themselves sought. This was made explicit in a number of documents reviewed for this study. For instance, a meeting between Maurice Bishop and Andrei Gromyko discloses not only the high level of interest the Kremlin leadership had in the New Jewel Movement, but also the degree to which the Grenadian government saw itself as an evolving Soviet client. Bishop emphasized to Gromyko the special geographical position of Grenada and his government's desire to promote the world communist movement in the Caribbean region.<sup>23</sup> Bishop goes on to state that the airport in Grenada could be used to interdict NATO supply lines.<sup>24</sup>

Accounts of the meetings of the New Jewel Movement's political bureau delineate their linkage with the Soviet-Cuban regional and international infrastructure for conducting political warfare. For instance, the New Jewel Movement established relations with national liberation movements supported by the USSR, including the PLO and SWAPO.<sup>25</sup> In communiqués between the Grenadian government and its embassy representatives in Moscow, the Bishop government declared its desire to fight against imperialism.<sup>26</sup> Other documents included a 1981 letter from Bishop to Hafez Assad of Syria in which Bishop states that Grenada will continue to support the PLO.<sup>27</sup> A letter from a Grenadian official in Moscow recounted his meeting with Soviet communist officials in which he expressed the New Jewel Movement's desire to play a client role.<sup>28</sup>

Of particular interest is a series of items which documented the role of Grenada as a Soviet surrogate in the Socialist International (SI). Grenada was one of a number of regional members of a special secret caucus of the SI.<sup>29</sup> What was the purpose of this secret caucus? To influence the SI to oppose more aggressively US policy in Latin America and to support the government of Nicaragua

and the guerrillas in El Salvador. What is most interesting is that one of the members of this secret regional caucus of the SI was Cuba. However, Cuba is not a member of the Socialist International. What this suggests is an intricate effort by the USSR and Cuba to manipulate this international organization.

Finally, still other documents demonstrate that Grenada was involved with Soviet front groups and took part in the Congress of the World Center for Resistance to Imperialism, Zionism, Racism, and Reaction.<sup>30</sup> Pineiro counseled Grenada on its role in the Congress, and a Grenadian Peace Council was established as the national-level affiliate of a major Soviet front organization, the World Peace Council.<sup>31</sup>

In sum, one finds a number of Soviet surrogates involved both in assisting the New Jewel Movement to consolidate power, and in integrating Grenada into the world revolutionary process.

#### Central America

An examination of the Central American situation suggests a pattern similar to the Grenadian case. Testimony by former Sandinista officials and captured documents outline Moscow's extensive use of surrogates. Testimony by a former Sandinista counterintelligence officer, Miguel Bolanos Hunter, provides firsthand evidence of the Soviet, Cuban, East German, and Bulgarian roles in both the seizure of power and the consolidation of control.<sup>32</sup>

According to Bolanos, officers from the Cuban intelligence agency (DGI) occupy key administrative positions in the Nicaraguan state security apparatus. In fact, the head of the intelligence directorate is a Cuban who has served as a link between the Sandinista Front for National Liberation (FSLN) and Cuba for a number of years. Following the revolution, FSLN cadres were sent to Cuba for intelligence and counterintelligence training. In addition to Cubans, there were Soviet KGB instructors at the intelligence school in Cuba. Bolanos noted that Grenadians and Angolans also were receiving

training. In other words, the Angolans, like the Nicaraguans, were being educated in the art of power consolidation and control. In addition to basic training in counterintelligence, Bolanos received special instruction in how to manipulate and manage the foreign media in Nicaragua. Those Nicaraguan cadres who were considered both politically reliable and capable were selected to attend the five-year course at the higher KGB school in Moscow.

Within the Nicaraguan intelligence organization, Cuban advisors serve in all of the subdivisions of the counterintelligence and intelligence directorates. East Germans provide technical support in the area of electronic surveillance procedures. Soviet surrogates also were involved in other power consolidation measures, most important the development and expansion of the armed forces. In fact, immediately following the seizure of power, senior ranking Soviet military officers arrived in Nicaragua. Cubans also played a role in training officers for senior-level and general staff positions within the Nicaraguan armed forces.

In addition to the Cuban intelligence, the Americas Department of the Cuban Communist Party and the Department of Special Operations have been involved in Nicaragua. Their functions relate more to the promotion of low-level violence than to power consolidation. The Department of Special Operations assists with the training and advising of Salvadoran guerrilla forces. Along with other Soviet surrogates, it monitors and helps direct operations from guerrilla base camps in Nicaragua. According to Bolanos, the FSLN is part of the regional network for promoting low-level violence in the region. He noted that Salvador is the main target, but Honduras and Guatemala also receive attention. In cooperation with other Soviet surrogates the FSLN also provides international propaganda and political assistance to "national liberation movements." In cooperation with the Cuban Communist Party's Americas Department, the FSLN established a Department of International Relations in order to conduct



political warfare campaigns in the region more effectively. As noted earlier, the objective of these tactics is to assist in legitimizing the cause and actions of the guerrilla movements in the international arena while discrediting US policy. In sum, one finds coordination between the FSLN's International Relations Department, the Cuban Communist Party's Americas Department, and the CPSU International Department, indicating important institutional and operational arrangements.

Another former Sandinista official, Eden Pastora, has also provided interesting insights into Soviet surrogate activities. Pastora's testimony has focused on military assistance.<sup>33</sup> He observed that in the period prior to the seizure of power, the Cubans played an important role in supporting the FSLN forces against the Somoza government. Castro assisted in the unification of the FSLN factions. Prior to this the different guerrilla factions were involved in internecine arguments over the appropriate road to revolution. Would this take place through the proletariat, through the peasants in the countryside, or through a general spontaneous revolt? These arguments were tearing the movement apart, but Castro succeeded in bringing the factions together. Additionally, as the movement achieved success in 1978, arms began to flow in for the final offensive. Cuba set up an operational center for distribution of weapons to the Sandinistas.

With respect to power consolidation, Pastora explained that Soviet surrogate military advisors were in place almost immediately following Somoza's fall, taking part in the rapid buildup of the Nicaraguan armed forces. He recounts his meeting with former Soviet Minister of Defense Marshal Dmitri Ustinov to arrange for arms shipments to Nicaragua. Finally, with rapidly evolving Soviet-Cuban involvement in Nicaragua, the FSLN, according to Pastora, allowed its territory to become a base for power projection throughout the region.

In addition to these interviews, a number of documents captured in Central America also reveal how Soviet surrogates have been involved in the support of the Salvadoran

guerrilla movement. For instance, one item contained the account by Shafik Handal, the General Secretary of the Salvadoran Communist Party, of his 1980 trip to various Soviet surrogate states to arrange for the shipment of arms.<sup>34</sup> His account provides evidence of the network for acquiring and transporting Soviet surrogate assistance to insurgent movements. Handal arranged for arms to be smuggled to Salvador from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Vietnam, and Ethiopia. The report also discloses the concerted efforts by the USSR and its allies to cover up their role. This was to be achieved in various ways. For instance, US-made weapons were to be transferred from Vietnam and Ethiopia. The Czechs were to provide rebuilt World War II weapons and other Czech weapons that are readily available on the world market. Soviet-produced arms, on the other hand, were not to be made available, at least at that time. Finally, during the trip Handal often met with high-level government officials, including Vietnam's Le Duan, Ethiopia's Mengistu, and leading officials from the CPSU's International Department.

A captured document from Salvador reveals that Castro also played a unifying role with respect to the Salvadoran guerrilla factions. In a letter dated December 1979, the three major Salvadoran guerrilla factions—the Armed Forces of National Resistance, the Communist Party of El Salvador, and the People's Liberation Army—announced the signing of a solidarity agreement and thanked Castro for his assistance in forging their unification.<sup>35</sup> It appears that in recent years Castro has demanded unity among guerrilla elements as a precondition for military assistance. In other letters addressed to Manuel Pineiro, one finds the guerrillas providing the Cuban leadership with operational details concerning the situation on the ground in El Salvador.<sup>36</sup> This would appear to underline the close cooperation at the highest levels between Cuba and the Salvadoran revolutionaries. In these particular letters the guerrillas begin by explaining how the Castro-inspired unification

has broadened their rural base, and they thank Pineiro for his advice. They also describe recent personnel assignments, new propaganda slogans, and external political activities.

Expanding international political support for the Salvadoran guerrillas is an important aspect of Soviet strategy. One of the documents, the Manifesto of the World Front for Solidarity with the Salvadoran People, outlines the use of Soviet front groups for this purpose.<sup>37</sup> Among the members of the World Front's Permanent Bureau was a representative of the US Communist Party, who also was a leading official in the US Peace Council (the national-level affiliate of the World Peace Council), and the director of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. The latter organization has been a major actor in organizing opposition in the United States to Reagan Administration policy in El Salvador.<sup>38</sup>

The importance of building international public opinion in support of the Salvadoran guerrillas is depicted in the report by Farad Handal (the brother of Shafik Handal) on his trip in 1980 to develop and expand the solidarity movement in the United States.<sup>39</sup> It appears that the Salvadoran guerrillas believe that one way to succeed in El Salvador is to influence public opinion in the United States to oppose the Reagan Administration's involvement in the conflict. The USSR used the World Peace Council to accomplish the same objective in an interesting operation in Western Europe during the Vietnam War. Handal identified himself not as a member of the Salvadoran Communist Party, but as a member of the National Democratic Union (the legal front of the Salvadoran Communist Party). His travel notes establish that the Salvadoran solidarity movement in the United States is a target of the Salvadoran insurgents, and that they hope to penetrate and influence it. Approximately half of the solidarity groups Handal met with were headed by members of either the US Communist Party or the US Peace Council. Also prominent were Salvadoran members of various guerrilla movements who are living in

the United States. While in the United States, Handal linked up with the Cubans during his visit to the United Nations. They advised him to work with certain members of the US Congress and also made contacts for Handal in Washington. While in New York City, he met with the leaders of the US Communist Party and members of the previously mentioned World Front, as well as representatives from the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. US Communist Party members in Washington made the arrangements for Handal's meetings with members of the US Congress. Finally, Handal recounts in his notes a meeting with PLO representatives who offered to assist the guerrillas with arms and training.

### The Middle East

Over the last two decades the PLO has emerged in the Middle East and on the international scene as a major practitioner of the art of protracted war. Within the network of Soviet-sponsored and Soviet-supported international terrorism, the PLO has been both a recipient of Soviet surrogate assistance and a supplier of this type of assistance to other insurgent and terrorist movements. Documents captured in the Middle East reveal the complex nature of the linkage between the PLO and a number of Soviet surrogates, as well as the PLO connection with the other international terrorist and guerrilla movements supported by Moscow. Since the end of the 1960s, the PLO-Soviet connection has become increasingly intimate, with steady intensification of cooperation clearly demonstrated in captured documents.

The top level at which the policies and actions of the PLO are coordinated with the USSR is demonstrated in the accounts of meetings between Gromyko and Farouk Kaddoumi (the "Foreign Minister" of the PLO), and between Arafat, Gromyko, and Ponomarev. The session between Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko and the PLO's Kaddoumi took place in 1983.<sup>40</sup> The minutes disclose deep Soviet involvement with its PLO surrogate. In fact, during the meeting Gromyko advised Kaddoumi on strategy and

tactics and strongly intimated that the PLO should subordinate itself to Syria. The fact that Gromyko felt he could suggest this to Kaddoumi is in itself significant. The meeting between Gromyko, Ponomarev, and Arafat took place in 1979, and it likewise demonstrates the importance the Soviet leadership places on support and guidance of the PLO.<sup>41</sup> The topics for discussion included PLO strategy in the UN; thwarting US policy initiatives in the Middle East; PLO contacts with Cuba, Syria, Polisario, and Iran (during the 1979 US hostage crisis); Soviet political warfare actions in support of the PLO; and PLO contacts with Soviet front groups.

The origins of what can be characterized by the end of the 1970s as an intimate relationship between the USSR and the PLO were outlined in an interview conducted with Vladimir Sakharov, a former Soviet Foreign Ministry official who worked clandestinely in cooperation with the KGB. He was assigned to the Middle East from 1967 to 1971.<sup>42</sup> Specifically, he detailed the increased Kremlin support for national liberation movements after the 1967 war and how this affected Soviet-PLO linkages. Sakharov described the growing Soviet political and military support through training programs conducted by the KGB and the Soviet military's General Staff intelligence organization, as well as the use of front groups to promote the cause and legitimacy of the PLO in the international arena. The latter, of course, are under the direction of the International Department.

The growth of paramilitary assistance from the Soviet Union and various surrogates is outlined in PLO documents captured in Lebanon. In 1982, a PLO-East German meeting in Berlin led to an East German offer to provide the PLO with small ships which, presumably, could be used for surface operations against Israel. Also discussed by the PLO representative and the Chief of Staff and Deputy Minister of Defense of East Germany were other kinds of military assistance and training.<sup>43</sup> Other documents depict training of PLO military cadres in the USSR, Hungary, and Bulgaria in paramilitary warfare and conventional platoon-, company-, and battalion-level operations.<sup>44</sup> Military

support was also arranged from Vietnam and North Korea, including training in air defense and command procedures.<sup>45</sup> In sum, the Soviets, East Europeans, Cubans, and Vietnamese have trained PLO forces in military tactics at both the low-intensity or paramilitary level and the conventional warfare level.<sup>46</sup> The preparation of the PLO in both types of warfare is likewise reflected in the kinds of arms that were transferred to the Middle East and captured by the Israelis in 1982. They included not only small arms and other kinds of equipment used in paramilitary operations, but tanks, APCs, air defense weapons, military vessels, rocket systems, and so on.

The USSR and its surrogates train PLO cadres at institutions like Patrice Lumumba University. Documents also refer to the Soviet use of fronts to promote the PLO cause. Sakharov described Soviet coordination of various aspects of this international political propaganda campaign, which started in the late 1960s or early 1970s and employed the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization. Egypt became the center for this activity.<sup>47</sup> In 1979, after a decade of these developments, Ponomarev told Arafat of plans to create a World Solidarity Committee on behalf of the PLO. He noted that Moscow had established a similar committee for the Vietnamese in the 1960s and that it had been highly successful.<sup>48</sup> Finally, the documents showed the PLO playing the role of a surrogate and providing paramilitary assistance to other Soviet-backed terrorist and guerrilla organizations. This took the form of training cadres in camps in Lebanon. For instance, one document captured in Tyre identified the following groups in PLO camps: Salvadorans, Haitians, southern Africans (African National Congress and SWAPO), and Turks.<sup>49</sup> Other documents outline linkages with extremist groups across the ideological spectrum, ranging from the Japanese Red Army to the West German neo-Nazi group headed by Karl Heinz Hoffman.<sup>50</sup> In effect, these documents demonstrate PLO involvement with terrorist and guerrilla groups from almost all continents and ideological perspectives.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to examine through primary sources how the Soviet Union employs surrogates in support of two aspects of their Third World policy: promotion of low-level violence and consolidation of power. Captured documents and testimony by former insiders show that in both types of activities the Soviets employ surrogates in functionally specific ways. With respect to low-level violence, it is clear that Moscow integrated surrogates into its dual strategy of promoting the cause of terrorist and insurgent movements in the international arena through the employment of politico-psychological warfare campaigns, as well as in assisting these groups "on the ground" through arms transfers, training, and advisory support.

In addition to detailed information on the use of East European, Cuban, Vietnamese, and North Korean surrogates to support these aspects of Soviet policy, a number of other interesting developments emerge from the evidence. One, the Nicaraguan FSLN was transformed from a recipient of such assistance to the status of a surrogate of Moscow's Cuban surrogate. In this capacity Nicaragua has emerged as a base from which to promote low-level violence in the Central American region. Two, the documents captured in Grenada suggest that the New Jewel Movement sought to turn Grenada into a base for similar activities in the eastern Caribbean. Soviet and surrogate assistance appears to have been geared, at least at that time, to achieving this objective. Three, in the case of the PLO, we see an example of a recipient which, while continuing to receive Soviet support, became a surrogate involved in the promotion of low-level violence on behalf of the USSR. Finally, the primary source material also discloses the Soviet use of surrogates as part of a policy of assisting newly established Leninist regimes in consolidating internal control. In both Grenada and Nicaragua the Soviet Union and its proxies assisted friendly governments in arming and training their security forces. Although not an official government, the

PLO received similar assistance during the latter half of the 1970s and early 1980s. It was at this time that the PLO was, in effect, a de facto government in southern Lebanon. As in the case of promotion of low-level violence, surrogates performed functionally specific roles in this process.

## NOTES

1. Among the standard and newer works on Soviet policy in the Third World, I would recommend: Stephen Hosmer and Thomas Wolfe, *Soviet Policy and Practice Toward Third World Conflict* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1983); Robert Donaldson, ed., *The Soviet Union in the Third World: Successes and Failures* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1981); Walter Laqueur, ed., *The Pattern of Soviet Conduct in the Third World* (New York: Praeger, 1983); Carol R. Saivetz and Sylvia Woodby, *Soviet-Third World Relations* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985); Jerry Hough, *The Struggle for the Third World* (Washington: Brookings, 1986); Daniel Papp, *Soviet Perceptions of the Developing World in the 1980s* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1985); Raymond Duncan, ed., *Soviet Policy in Developing Countries* (Waltham, Mass.: Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970); Elizabeth Valkenier, *The Soviet Union and the Third World, An Economic Bind* (New York: Praeger, 1983); Roger Kanet, ed., *The Soviet Union and the Developing Nations* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1975).

2. Serious literature on Soviet surrogates or proxies is far from extensive. Among the better treatments of the subject, I would recommend: Gavriel Ra'anan, "Surrogate Forces and Power Projection," in Uri Ra'anan, Robert Pfaltzgraff, and Geoffrey Kemp, *Power Projection* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1982); Rose Gottemoeller, "The Potential for Conflict Between Soviet and Cuban Policies in the Third World," *Conflict*, 5 (No. 4, 1984); Robert Leiken, *Soviet Strategy in Latin America* (New York: Praeger, Washington Papers, 1982); Christopher Lamb, "The Nature of Proxy War," in William Taylor and Steven Manramen, eds., *The Future of Conflict in the 1980s* (Los Alamos, N.M.: Los Alamos National Laboratory, 1982); Jiri Valenta and Shannon Butler, "East German Security Police in Africa," in Michael Radu, ed., *Eastern Europe in the Third World* (New York: Praeger, 1981); Uri Ra'anan, Richard Shultz, et al., *Third World Marxist-Leninist Regimes: Strengths, Vulnerabilities, and U.S. Policy* (New York: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1985); "Russia's Wars by Proxy," *Foreign Reports*, 25 February 1975; Brian Crozier, "The Surrogate Forces of the Soviet Union," *Conflict Studies*, No. 92 (February 1978).

3. In addition to the literature cited in note one, also reviewed were sources that focused on Soviet policy in specific Third World regions. These include: Galia Golan, *The Soviet Union and the Palestine Liberation Organization* (New York: Praeger, 1980); Roberta Goren, *The Soviet Union and Terrorism* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984); Robert Freedman, *Soviet Policy in the Middle East Since 1970* (New York: Praeger, 1982); Mark Kauppi and R. Craig Nation, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East in the 1980s* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1983); David Albright, ed., *Communism in Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1980); Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *The Angolan War: A Study of Soviet Policy in the Third World* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980); Marina Ottaway, *Soviet and American Influence in the Horn of Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1982); Robert Wesson, ed., *Communism in Central America and the Caribbean*

(Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1982); Cole Blasier, *The Giant's Rival: The USSR and Latin America* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1983); Thomas Hammond, *Red Star Over Afghanistan* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983); Donald Zagoria, ed., *Soviet Policy in East Asia* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1982); Morris Rothenberg, *The USSR and Africa* (Washington: Advanced International Studies Institute, 1980).

4. Richard Shultz and Roy Godson have noted that "active measures" is a Soviet term that came into use in the 1950s to describe certain overt and covert techniques for influencing events and behavior in, and the actions of, foreign countries. Active measures may entail influencing the policies of another government, undermining confidence in its leaders and institutions, disrupting relations between other nations, and discrediting and weakening governmental and nongovernmental opponents. This frequently involves attempts to deceive the target (foreign governmental and nongovernmental elites or mass audiences), and to distort the target's perceptions of reality. Active measures may be conducted overtly through officially sponsored foreign propaganda channels, diplomatic relations, and cultural diplomacy. Covert political techniques include the use of covert propaganda, oral and written disinformation, agents of influence, clandestine radios, and international front organizations. Although active measures principally are political in nature, military maneuvers and paramilitary assistance to insurgents and terrorists also may be involved. Taken from *Dezinformatsia: Active Measures in Soviet Strategy* (New York: Pergamon-Brassey's, 1984). I have argued elsewhere that with respect to the Third World the paramilitary aspects of Soviet active measures are as significant as the political tactics. See Richard Shultz, "Soviet Strategy and Organization: Active Measures and Insurgency," in *The Red Orchestra*, ed. Dennis Bark et al. (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution, forthcoming 1986).

5. On these various political measures see Richard Shultz, "Recent Regional Patterns," and Herbert Romerstein, "Political Doctrine and Apparatus," in *Hydra of Carnage: International Linkages of Terrorism—The Witnesses Speak*, ed. Uri Ra'anani, Robert L. Pfaltzgraf, Jr., Richard Shultz, Ernst Halperin, and Igor Lukes (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1985); James Atkinson, *The Politics of Struggle* (Chicago: Regnery, 1966); Roy Godson, *Labor in Soviet Global Strategy* (New York: National Strategy Information Center, 1984); Arieh Eilan, "Soviet Diplomacy in the Third World," in Laqueur, ed., *The Pattern of Soviet Conduct in the Third World*; Alvin Rubinstein, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II* (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop, 1981); Juliana Pilon, "The UN and the USSR," *Survey*, 27 (Autumn-Winter 1983).

6. John Dziak, "Military Doctrine and Structure," in Ra'anani et al., *Hydra of Carnage*; Mark Katz, *The Third World in Soviet Military Thought* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1982); John Copper and Daniel Papp, eds., *Communist Nations' Military Assistance* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1983); Hosmer and Wolfe, *Soviet Policy and Practice Toward Third World Conflict*.

7. With respect to power consolidation, perhaps the best source of information can be found in the literature on Soviet intelligence. See Raymond Rocca and John Dziak, *Bibliography on Soviet Intelligence and Security Services* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985).

8. For a discussion of this see Francis Fukuyama, "The New Marxist-Leninist States and Internal Conflict in the Third World," in Ra'anani et al., *Third World Marxist-Leninist Regimes*.

9. Richard Shultz, "The Role of External Forces in Third World Conflict," *Comparative Strategy*, 4 (No. 2, 1983); Hammond, *Red Star Over Afghanistan*.

10. These materials are contained in a study recently published by the faculty of the International Security Studies Program of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. See Ra'anani et al., *Hydra of Carnage*, pp. 301-620. The documents are categorized under the following regional sections: Central America, Grenada, Middle East, Europe, and Africa. There also are sections on "The Narcotics International" and "The Threat Within" (the United States). Each section contains primary source materials listed numerically.

11. Ra'anani et al., *Hydra of Carnage*. This larger "Oral History Project," which is in progress, is under the auspices of the International Security Studies Program of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. The subject investigated concerns specifically Soviet decision-making as it relates to the panoply of protracted/low-intensity operations, including arms transfers, training and advisory support, intelligence, psychological warfare, disinformation and active measures, and the use of surrogate forces. The primary objective is to determine, through the information and insights provided by those who were either directly or indirectly involved, how the Soviet Union's decision-making and operational apparatus plans these activities, integrates East European bloc and other surrogate (Cuban, Nicaraguan, etc.) capabilities and implements them "in the field." The goal is to ascertain how policy and process proceed from the "center" in Moscow, through the East European bloc, through the other surrogates, and are implemented "on the ground." Clearly, however, this sharply defined target cannot be attained without a simultaneous effort to shed light upon the broader parameters of politico-military doctrine and strategy within which specific Soviet and surrogate operations play their respective roles.

To accomplish these rather ambitious objectives, the ISSP faculty developed a research design based on reasonably structured interviews with individuals possessing direct or indirect knowledge of different aspects of the USSR's decision-making process and operational apparatus. The interviewees are divided into the following two categories: (1) former intelligence, foreign ministry, and military officials, as well as members of the institutes concerned with international affairs, from the USSR, East European bloc, Nicaragua, Cuba, and Afghanistan, who have "come in from the cold"; and (2) emigres from the USSR who were engaged in sensitive work pertaining to science and technology, especially as it relates to defense applications.

12. "Documents 1 and 2: The USSR Agrees to Arm Grenada," in Ra'anani et al., *Hydra of Carnage*, pp. 363-69. The two documents were formally titled "AGREEMENT and PROTOCOL between the Government of Grenada and the Government of Soviet Socialist Republic on deliveries from the Union of SSR to Grenada of special and other equipment."

13. "Document 3: The Cuban Military Presence," *ibid.*, pp. 370-72. The document was formally titled "Protocol of the Military Collaboration Between the Government of the Republic of Cuba and the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada."

14. "Documents 4 & 5: Vietnam offers to teach Yankee Warfare," *ibid.*, pp. 373-75. Document 4 is a letter from the Grenadian Ambassador in Cuba to his Vietnamese counterpart, while Document 5 is a letter from Grenada's Embassy in Cuba, reporting on further offers of training from Vietnam.

15. "Document 6: North Korea adds to the Grenadian Arsenal," *ibid.*, pp. 376-78. This document is in the form of a formal "Agreement between the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada and the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the free offer of military assistance to the People's Revolutionary Government of Grenada by the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea."

16. "Documents 7 and 8: Arms from Czechoslovakia via Cuba," *ibid.*, pp. 379-81. Document 7 is an updated letter

from the Grenadian Embassy in Cuba reporting that the Czechs have agreed to provide weapons, while Document 8 is a bill of lading for shipment of these weapons.

17. "Document 9: East Germany Aids Grenada's Internal Security," *ibid.*, pp. 382-83. Within the network of assistance provided by the USSR and its client states, the East Germans appear to specialize in providing the equipment and training for an effective internal security apparatus.

18. "Document 10: Training Request to Andropov," *ibid.*, pp. 384-85.

19. "Document 11: Grenadian Students in the USSR," *ibid.*, pp. 386-87. This report from Grenada's Embassy in Moscow indicates the variety of training support the Soviet Union was providing to Grenada. It outlines the specific military schools, institutes, and academies they were assigned to attend in the USSR.

20. "Document 12: Cuban-Grenadian Communist Party Agreement," *ibid.*, pp. 388-90.

21. See "Documents 13, 14, and 15: International Support Network," *ibid.*, pp. 391-94. Actually, the Pineiro communique (Document 13) is one of three documents providing this information to the New Jewel Movement. Document 14 is a memo to an Americas Department official from the analysis section of Cuban intelligence (DGI) listing addresses of communist parties in Europe and Asia, while Document 15 is a Cuban memo giving the addresses of communist parties participating in an international conference on solidarity with Grenada.

22. "Document 16: Cuban Report on Grenada's Churches," *ibid.*, pp. 395-96. The report was prepared by the Americas Department of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party.

23. "Document 17: Bishop-Gromyko Meeting: Intended Use of Grenada's Airport," *ibid.*, pp. 397-99.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 399. "Grenada's airport is [a] direct threat to the security interests of the USA [by its possible use in] interdicting NATO supply lines."

25. "Document 19: Minutes of Political Bureau Meetings," *ibid.*, pp. 402-06.

26. "Document 22: Embassy Report from Moscow," *ibid.*, pp. 410-11.

27. "Document 21: Bishop-Assad Letter," *ibid.*, pp. 408-09.

28. "Document 24: Relations with the Soviet Union," *ibid.*, pp. 415-17. This outlines Grenada's self-proposed "Role in Regional Affairs," "Relations with other Members of the Socialist Community," and the "Linkage of Grenada's International Activities to Relations with the USSR."

29. "Documents 25, 26, and 27: Grenada, the Socialist International and Cuban Infiltration," *ibid.*, pp. 418-22.

30. "Document 28: The 'World Center' and Cuban Influence," *ibid.*, pp. 423-24.

31. "Document 30: Grenada and World Peace," *ibid.*, pp. 428-29.

32. "Document 1: Testimony of Miguel Bolanos Hunter," *ibid.*, pp. 309-20. Bolanos is a former counterintelligence officer in the counterespionage section of the Sandinista state security apparatus, the DGSE. He was responsible for overseeing Western embassies and members of the Western press when he served in the DGSE. These excerpts are part of a much larger transcript of remarks contained in his interview for the Oral History Project, International Security Studies Program, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

33. "Document 2: Testimony of Eden Pastora Gomez," *ibid.*, pp. 321-32. Pastora first became involved in the opposition to the Somoza government in 1959. He gained international prominence when on 22 August 1978 he led a group of 25 Sandinista commandos in the seizure of the National

Palace, taking 2000 hostages. During the Sandinista final offensive he commanded the southern front, which was the scene of the bitterest fighting of the war. After the Sandinista victory, he was appointed Vice-Minister of the Interior and was responsible for overseeing the Sandinista Popular Militias. He resigned in 1981 and on 15 April 1982 officially broke with the Sandinistas and established the guerrilla group ARDE to challenge them. His testimony here is part of a much larger oral history interview compiled by the ISSP, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

34. "Document 4: Shafik Handal's Travel Notes," *ibid.*, pp. 335-39.

35. "Document 5: DRU Letter to Fidel Castro," *ibid.*, pp. 340-41.

36. "Documents 6 and 7: DRU Letters to Manuel Pineiro," *ibid.*, pp. 342-44.

37. "Document 8: Formation of the FMSPS," *ibid.*, pp. 345-46.

38. Also see "Document 9: Comments from FMSPS Map," *ibid.*, pp. 347-49. This document contains comments on state-level movements opposed to US policy in Central America. These comments are derived from a map detailing the international network of solidarity movements supporting the Salvadoran guerrillas as part of the World Front for Solidarity with the Salvadoran People.

39. "Document 10: Farad Handal's Travel Notes," *ibid.*, pp. 350-58.

40. "Document 3: Gromyko-Kaddoumi Meeting," *ibid.*, pp. 492-98.

41. "Document 4: Arafat Meeting with Gromyko and Ponomarev," *ibid.*, pp. 499-513.

42. "Document 5: Testimony of Vladimir Sakharov," *ibid.*, pp. 514-18. During the period 1967-1971, Sakharov (a pseudonym) served in North Yemen, Egypt, and Kuwait and was personally involved in a variety of Soviet operations. The excerpt here draws on his extensive operational experience in the Middle East to bear witness to the early years of Soviet-PLO relations. This is only part of a much larger interview transcript compiled under the auspices of the Oral History Project of the ISSP, Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

43. "Document 16: Report of PLO Delegation to East Germany," *ibid.*, pp. 540-43.

44. "Documents 17-20: The PLO and Soviet Surrogates—Eastern Europe," *ibid.*, pp. 544-47. These four documents are selected from numerous captured certificates and letters dealing with PLO training courses and programs organized by the USSR, Hungary, and East Germany.

45. "Documents 23-25: Communist Support for the PLO—Asia," *ibid.*, pp. 551-53.

46. "Document 27: The Global Extent of Military Support for the PLO" and "Document 6: Report of PLO Mission to the USSR," *ibid.*, pp. 555-58, 519-22. The latter document lists courses that PLO officers attended in order to receive instruction in how to command a tank battalion, tank company, infantry company, reconnaissance company, infantry platoon, antitank platoon, Sagger missile platoon, and anti-aircraft platoon. Almost every PLO faction was represented in these courses.

47. "Document 5: Testimony of Vladimir Sakharov," *ibid.*, pp. 516-18.

48. "Document 4: Arafat Meeting with Gromyko and Ponomarev," *ibid.*, p. 511.

49. "Document 11: PLO Training of Other 'National Liberation Movements,'" *ibid.*, pp. 531-32.

50. "Document 12: The Japanese Red Army Explains Its Relations with the PLO" and "Document 15: The PLO Aids Neo-Nazis," *ibid.*, pp. 533-34, 538-39.

# LESSONS OF HISTORY AND LESSONS OF VIETNAM

by

DAVID H. PETRAEUS

One of the few unequivocally sound lessons of history is that the lessons we should learn are usually learned imperfectly if at all.

—Bernard Brodie<sup>1</sup>

Trying to use the lessons of the past correctly poses two dilemmas. One is the problem of balance: knowing how much to rely on the past as a guide and how much to ignore it. The other is the problem of selection: certain lessons drawn from experience contradict others.

—Richard Betts<sup>2</sup>

Of all the disasters of Vietnam, the worst may be the "lessons" that we'll draw from it. . . . Lessons from such complex events require much reflection to be of more than negative worth. But reactions to Vietnam . . . tend to be visceral rather than reflective.

—Albert Wohlstetter<sup>3</sup>

Of all the disasters of Vietnam the worst could be our unwillingness to learn enough from them.

—Stanley Hoffman<sup>4</sup>

In seeking solutions to problems, occupants of high office frequently turn to the past for help. This tendency is understandable; potentially, history is an enormously rich resource. What was done before in seemingly similar situations and what the results were can be of great assistance to policymakers. As this article contends, however, it is important to recognize that history can mislead and obfuscate as well as guide and illuminate. Lessons of the past, in general, and the lessons of Vietnam, in particular, contain not only policy-relevant analogies, but also ambiguities and paradoxes. Despite such problems, however, there is mounting evidence that lessons and analogies drawn from history often play an important part in policy decisions.<sup>5</sup>

Political scientists, organizational psychologists, and historians have assembled considerable evidence suggesting that one reason decision-makers behave as they do is

that they are influenced by lessons they have derived from certain events in the past, especially traumatic events during their lifetimes. "Hardly anything is more important in international affairs," writes Paul Kattenburg, "than the historical images and perceptions that men carry in their heads."<sup>6</sup> These images constitute an important part of the "intellectual baggage" that policymakers carry into office and draw on when making decisions.

Use of history in this way is virtually universal. As diplomatic historian Ernest May has pointed out, "Eagerness to profit from the lessons of history is the one common characteristic in the statecraft of such diverse types as Stanley Baldwin, Adolf Hitler, Charles de Gaulle, and John F. Kennedy." Each was "determined to hear the voices of history, to avoid repeating the presumed mistakes of the past." President Reagan appears to be similarly influenced by the past. His "ideas about the world flow from his

life," *The New York Times'* Leslie Gelb contends, "from personal history . . . a set of convictions lodged in his mind as maxims."<sup>8</sup>

Perceived lessons of the past have been found to be especially important during crises. When a sudden international development threatens national security interests and requires a quick response, leaders are prone to draw on historical analogies in deciding how to proceed. Indeed, several studies have concluded that "the greater the crisis, the greater the propensity for decision-makers to supplement information about the objective state of affairs with information drawn from their own past experiences."<sup>9</sup>

The use of historical analogies by statesmen, however, frequently is flawed. Many scholars concur with Ernest May's judgment that "policy-makers ordinarily use history badly."<sup>10</sup> Numerous pitfalls await those who seek guidance from the past, and policymakers have seemed adept at finding them. Those who employ history, therefore, should be aware of the common fallacies to which they may fall victim. As Alexis de Tocqueville warned, misapplied lessons of history may be more dangerous than ignorance of the past.<sup>11</sup>

The first error that policymakers frequently commit when employing history is to focus unduly on a particularly dramatic or traumatic event which they experienced personally.<sup>12</sup> The last war or the most recent crisis assumes unwarranted importance in the mind of the decision-maker seeking historical precedents to illuminate the present. This inclination often is unfounded. There is little reason why those events that occurred during the lifetime of a particular leader and thus provide ready analogies should in fact be the best guides to the present or future. Just because the decision-maker happened to experience the last war is no reason that it, rather than earlier wars, should provide guidance for the contemporary situation.<sup>13</sup>

The fallacy of viewing personal historical experience as most relevant to the present—without carefully considering alternative sources of comparison—is compounded by a tendency to remove analogies

from their unique contextual circumstances. Having seized on the first analogy that comes to mind, in too many instances policymakers do not search more widely. Nor, contends Ernest May, "do they pause to analyze the case, test its fitness, or even ask in what ways it might be misleading."<sup>14</sup> Historical outcomes are thus absorbed without paying careful attention to the details of their causation, and the result is lessons that are superficial and overgeneralized, analogies applied to a wide range of events with little sensitivity to variations in the situation.<sup>15</sup> The result is policy made, in Arthur Schlesinger's words, through "historical generalization wrenched illegitimately out of the past and imposed mechanically on the future."<sup>16</sup>

Finally, once persuaded that a particular event or phenomenon is repeating itself, policymakers are prone to narrow their thinking, seeing only those facts that conform to the image they have chosen as applicable. Contradictory information is filtered out. "As new information is received," observes Lloyd Jensen, "an effort is made to interpret that information so that it will be compatible with existing images and beliefs."<sup>17</sup>

In sum, lessons of the past are not always used wisely. Proper employment of history has been the exception rather than the rule. Historical analogies often are poorly chosen and overgeneralized. Their contextual circumstances frequently are overlooked. Traumatic personal experiences often exercise unwarranted tyranny over the minds of decision-makers. History is so often misused

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by policymakers, in fact, that many historians agree with Arthur Schlesinger's inversion of Santayana: "Those who *can* remember the past are condemned to repeat it."<sup>18</sup>

### THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM

It is not surprising that lessons taken from America's experience in Indochina have influenced the views and advice of US military leaders on virtually all post-Vietnam security crises in which the use of force was considered. This has been particularly evident in those cases where the similarities to US involvement in Indochina have been perceived to be most striking, such as the debate over American policy toward Central America.<sup>19</sup>

The frustrating experience of Vietnam is indelibly etched in the minds of America's senior military officers, and from it they seem to have taken three general lessons. First, the military has drawn from Vietnam a reminder of the finite limits of American public support for US involvement in a protracted conflict. This awareness was not, of course, a complete revelation to all in the military. Among the 20th-century wars the United States entered, only World War II enjoyed overwhelming support.<sup>20</sup> As early as the 19th century, Alexis de Tocqueville had observed that democracies—America's in particular—were better suited for "a sudden effort of remarkable vigor, than for the prolonged endurance of the great storms that beset the political existence of nations." Democracies, he noted, do not await the consequences of important undertakings with patience.<sup>21</sup>

After World War II, General George C. Marshall echoed that judgment, warning that "a democracy cannot fight a Seven Years War."<sup>22</sup> Yet such prescient observations as de Tocqueville's and Marshall's were temporarily overlooked; and, for those in the military, Vietnam was an extremely painful reaffirmation that when it comes to intervention, time and patience are not American virtues in abundant supply.

Second, the military has taken from Vietnam (and the concomitant repercussions

in the Pentagon) a heightened awareness that civilian officials are responsive to influences other than the objective conditions on the battlefield.<sup>23</sup> A consequence has been an increase in traditional military suspicions about politicians and political appointees. This generalization, admittedly, does not hold true across the board and has diminished somewhat in the past few years. Nonetheless, while the military still accepts emphatically the constitutional provision for civilian control of the armed forces,<sup>24</sup> there remain from the Vietnam era nagging doubts about the abilities and motivations of politicians. The military came away from Vietnam feeling, in particular, that the civilian leadership had not understood the conduct of military operations, had lacked the willingness to see things through, and frequently had held different perceptions about what was really important.<sup>25</sup> Vietnam was also a painful reminder that the military, not the transient occupants of high office, generally bears the heaviest burden during armed conflict. Vietnam gave new impetus to what Samuel Huntington described in the 1950s as the military's pacifist attitude. The military man, he wrote, "tends to see himself as the perennial victim of civilian warmongering. It is the people and the politicians, public opinion and governments who start wars. It is the military who have to fight them."<sup>26</sup> As retired General William A. Knowlton told members of the Army War College class of 1985: "Remember one lesson from the Vietnam era: Those who ordered the meal were not there when the waiter brought the check."<sup>27</sup>

Finally, the military took from Vietnam a new recognition of the limits of military power in solving certain types of problems in world affairs. In particular, Vietnam planted doubts in many military minds about the ability of US forces to conduct successful large-scale counterinsurgencies. These misgivings do not in all cases spring from doubts about the capabilities of American troops and units per se; even in Vietnam, military leaders recall, US units never lost a battle. Rather, the doubts that are part of the Vietnam legacy spring from a number of interrelated factors:

worries about a lack of popular support for what the public might perceive as ambiguous conflicts;<sup>28</sup> the previously mentioned suspicions about the willingness of politicians—not just those in the executive branch—to stay the course;<sup>29</sup> and lurking fears that the respective services have yet to come to grips with the difficult tasks of developing the doctrine, equipment, and forces suitable for nasty little wars.<sup>30</sup>

These lessons have had a chastening effect on military thinking. A more skeptical attitude is brought to the analysis of possible missions. “We’ve thrown over the old ‘can-do’ idea,” an Army Colonel at Fort Hood told *The New York Times*’ Drew Middleton. “Now we want to know exactly what they want us to do and how they think we can accomplish it.” Henceforth, senior military officers seem to feel, the United States should not engage in war unless it has a clear idea why it is fighting and is prepared to see the war through to a successful conclusion.<sup>31</sup>

Vietnam also increased the military inclination toward the “all or nothing” type of advice that characterized military views during the Eisenhower Administration’s deliberations in 1954 over intervention in Dien Bien Phu and the Kennedy Administration’s discussions over intervention in Laos in 1961. There is a conviction that when it comes to the use of force, America should either bite the bullet or duck, but not nibble.<sup>32</sup> “Once we commit force,” cautions Army Chief of Staff General John Wickham, “we must be prepared to back it up as opposed to just sending soldiers into operations for limited goals.”<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, noted Wickham’s predecessor, General Edward C. Meyer, before his retirement in 1983, commanders must be “given a freer hand in waging war than they had in Vietnam.”<sup>34</sup> In this view, if the United States is to intervene, it should do so in strength, accomplish its objectives rapidly, and withdraw as soon as conditions allow.

Additionally, the public must be made aware of the costs up front. Force must be committed only when there is a consensus of understanding among the American people that the effort is in the best interests of the

United States.<sup>35</sup> There is a belief that “Congress should declare war whenever large numbers of U.S. troops engage in sustained combat,” and that the American people must be mobilized because “a nation cannot fight in cold blood.”<sup>36</sup> Since time is crucial, furthermore, sufficient force must be used at the outset to ensure that the conflict can be resolved before the American people withdraw their support for it.<sup>37</sup>

Finally, Vietnam has led the senior military to believe that in the future, political leaders must better define objectives before putting soldiers at risk. “Don’t send military forces off to do anything unless you know what it is clearly that you want done,” warned then-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General John Vessey in 1983. “I am absolutely, unalterably opposed to risking American lives for some sort of military and political objectives that we don’t understand.”<sup>38</sup>

In short, rather than preparing to fight the last war, as generals and admirals are often accused of doing, contemporary military leaders seem far more inclined to avoid any involvement overseas that could become another Vietnam. The lessons taken from Vietnam work to that end; military support for the use of force abroad is contingent on the presence of specific preconditions chosen with an eye to avoiding a repetition of the US experience in Southeast Asia.

#### USING THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM

The lessons of Vietnam as drawn by American military leaders do, however, have their limitations. While they represent the distillation of considerable wisdom from America’s experience in Indochina, they nonetheless give rise to certain paradoxical prescriptions and should not be pushed beyond their limits. As this section will show, total resolution of the paradoxes that reside in the lessons of Vietnam is not possible, nor should it be expected given the nature of world events and domestic politics. Nonetheless, awareness of the limitations of the lessons of Vietnam is necessary if they are to be employed with sound judgment.

Users of the lessons of Vietnam should, first of all, recognize and strive to avoid the general pitfalls that await anyone who seeks useful analogies in the past. Most important, the fact that Vietnam was America's most recent major military engagement is no reason that it, rather than earlier conflicts, should be most relevant to future conflicts. Senior officials should remember the contextual circumstances of American involvement in Vietnam—the social fragmentation there, the leadership void, the difficult political situation, the geostrategic position, and so forth. They would be wise to recall Stanley Karnow's reminder that each foreign event "has its own singularities, which must be confronted individually and creatively. To see every crisis as another Vietnam is myopic, just as overlaying the Munich debacle on Vietnam was a distortion."<sup>39</sup> Hence specific guidelines for the use of force that draw on Vietnam, such as those discussed earlier and those announced by Secretary of Defense Weinberger,<sup>40</sup> should be applied with discrimination to specific cases and their circumstances, rather than in the rote manner that one-line principles of war are sometimes employed.

Policymakers employing the lessons of Vietnam, or the lessons of any other past event, should resist the American tendency for over-generalization.<sup>41</sup> For if nothing else, Vietnam should teach that global, holistic approaches do not work.<sup>42</sup> In short, when drawing on the lessons of Vietnam, senior officers would do well to recall the advice of Mark Twain:

We should be careful to get out of an experience only the wisdom that is in it—and stop there; lest we be like the cat that sits down on a hot stove lid. She will never sit down on a hot stove lid again—and that is well; but also she will never sit down on a cold one.<sup>43</sup>

Beyond recognizing such general pitfalls that can snare users of historical analogies, military leaders also should be aware of the paradoxes that reside in certain of the prescriptions derived from the lessons of

Vietnam. In particular, the guidelines taken from America's experience in Vietnam contain a significant dilemma about when to use force, appear to embody a potentially counterproductive approach to civil-military relations, and create a quandary over counterinsurgency doctrine and force structuring.

As explained earlier, many military leaders have concluded on the basis of the Vietnam experience that the United States should not intervene abroad militarily unless: there is support at home; there are clear political and military objectives; success appears achievable within a reasonable time; and military commanders will be given the freedom to do what they believe is necessary to achieve that success. The problem with such guidelines, as Robert Osgood has observed, is that "acting upon them presupposes advance knowledge about a complicated interaction of military and political factors that no one can predict or guarantee."<sup>44</sup>

Still, making judgments about such factors has always been part of decisions to use military force. Statesmen and soldiers have always had to assess the time and force required for success, the likelihood of public support, and the potential gains and losses associated with any particular intervention or escalation. Eliminating the uncertainty inherent in such determinations has never been completely possible. But Vietnam and the relative decline in US power (and hence America's margin for error in international politics) over the past two decades have heightened the importance of these judgments and made them more problematic. The normal response to this kind of uncertainty is—and has been—caution and restraint.

Restraint rests uneasily, however, alongside another lesson of Vietnam: that if the United States is going to intervene it should do so quickly and massively in order to arrive in force while the patient still has strong vital signs.<sup>45</sup> But getting there faster next time implies making the decision to intervene in force early on. It requires overwhelming commitment from the outset so that, as George Fielding Eliot prescribes, "we

shall . . . look like military winners from the start of hostilities" and thereby "win popular support at home and confidence abroad." The American effort, therefore, should be designed to raise immediate doubt that the United States will permit a war to become protracted.<sup>46</sup>

Eliot does not specify, however, how long the appearance of winning will satisfy the American public in the absence of actual victory. Furthermore, getting there earlier next time is more easily said than done. Several post-Vietnam (and post-Watergate) developments—the 1973 War Powers Act, the decline of the "imperial presidency," increased congressional involvement in national security policy, and public wariness over involvement in another quagmire—pose obstacles to swift American action. Coupled with the short-term focus of political leaders and the constitutional separation of powers, these new phenomena (at least in post-World War II terms) make it difficult for the United States to decide early to intervene in any but the most clear-cut of circumstances. It usually takes what can be presented as a crisis before the United States is able to swing into action. The result is the oft-heard judgment that America is good at fighting only crusades.

Military leaders are, of course, well aware of the obstacles to early intervention. They realize that these obstacles, together with America's general inclination against involvement in situations that pose only an indirect threat to US interests, have the potential for incomplete public backing. As a result, senior military officers tend toward caution rather than haste, all the while cognizant of the dilemma confronting them: the country that hesitates may miss the opportune moment for effective action, while the country that acts in haste may become involved in a conflict that it may wish later it had avoided.

Another difficulty posed by the lessons drawn from the Vietnam experience centers on the issue of civil-military relations. During the Vietnam era, the traditional military suspicions of civilians hardened into more acute misgivings about civilian officials. This

feeling lingers despite the apparently close philosophical ties on the use of force between the incumbent Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>47</sup>

Yet such misgivings pose potential risks. Two post-World War II developments at either end of the so-called "spectrum of conflict," the advent of nuclear weapons and the rise of insurgencies, have made close civil-military integration more essential than ever before.

Counterinsurgency operations, in particular, require close civil-military cooperation. Unfortunately, this requirement runs counter to the traditional military desire, reaffirmed in the lessons of Vietnam, to operate autonomously and resist political meddling and micromanagement in operational concerns. Military officers are of course intimately aware of Clausewitz's dictum that war is a continuation of politics by other means; many, however, do not appear to accept fully the implications of Clausewitzian logic. This can cause problems, for while military resistance to political micromanagement is often well founded, it can, if carried to excess, be counterproductive. As Eliot Cohen has noted:

Small war almost always involves political interference in the affairs of the country in which it is waged; it is in the very nature of such wars that the military problems are difficult to distinguish from the political ones. The skills of manipulation which successful coalition warfare in such circumstances requires are not only scarce, but in some measure anathema to the American military. The desire of the American military to handle only pure "military" problems is . . . understandable in light of its Vietnam experience, but unrealistic nonetheless.<sup>48</sup>

Hence, particularly in such "small wars," military leaders should not allow the experience of Vietnam to reinforce the traditional military desire for autonomy in a way that impedes the crucial integration of political and military strategies. The organizational desire to be left alone must not lead those who bear the sword to lose their appreciation for the political and economic

context in which it is wielded. For while military force may be necessary in certain cases, it is seldom sufficient.<sup>49</sup>

Another paradox posed by the lessons of Vietnam concerns preparations for counterinsurgency warfare. The Vietnam experience left the military leadership feeling that they should advise against involvement in counterinsurgencies unless specific, perhaps unlikely, circumstances obtain. Committing US units to such contingencies appears a starkly problematic step—difficult to conclude before domestic support erodes and potentially so costly as to threaten the well-being of all of America's military forces (and hence the country's national security), not just those involved in the actual counterinsurgency. Senior military officers remember that Vietnam cost not only tens of thousands of lives, but also a generation of investment in new weapons and other equipment.<sup>50</sup> Morale plummeted throughout the military, and relations between the military and society were soured for nearly a decade.

A logical extension of this reasoning is that forces designed specifically for counterinsurgencies should not be given high priority, since if there are no sizable forces suitable for counterinsurgencies it will be easier to avoid involvement in that type of conflict.<sup>51</sup> An American president cannot commit what is not available. Similarly, along this line of thinking, plans for such contingencies should not be pursued with too much vigor.<sup>52</sup>

There are two problems with such reasoning, however. First, presidents may commit the United States to a conflict whether optimum forces exist or not. President Truman's decision to commit American ground troops to the defense of South Korea in 1950, for example, came as a surprise to military officers, who expected to execute a previously approved contingency plan that called for withdrawal of all American troops from the Korean peninsula in the event of an invasion. The early reverses in the ensuing conflict resulted in large measure from inadequate military readiness for such a mission.<sup>53</sup> So, prudence requires a

certain flexibility in forces, especially if the overall national strategy opens the possibility of involvement in operations throughout the spectrum of conflict (as it presently appears to do). If commitment to counterinsurgency operations is possible, the military should be prepared for it.

The second problem posed by such reasoning is that American involvement in counterinsurgencies is almost universally regarded as more likely than involvement in most other types of combat—more likely, for example, than involvement in high-intensity conflict on the plains of NATO's Central Region (though, of course, conflict in Europe potentially would have more significant consequences).<sup>54</sup> Indeed, the United States is already involved in counterinsurgencies, albeit not with US combat troops. American military trainers in El Salvador are assisting an ally combatting an insurgency, and, depending on one's definitions, US military elements are also providing assistance to a number of other countries fighting insurgents, among them, Chad, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Morocco, Peru, the Philippines, Sudan, and Thailand.

The senior military is thus in a dilemma. The lessons taken from Vietnam would indicate that, in general, involvement in a counterinsurgency should be avoided. But prudent preparation for a likely contingency (and a general inclination against limiting a president's options) lead the military to recognize that significant emphasis should be given to counterinsurgency forces, equipment, and doctrine. Military leaders are thereby in the difficult position of arguing for the creation of more forces suitable for such conflicts, while simultaneously realizing they may advise against the use of those forces unless very specific circumstances hold.<sup>55</sup>

Until recently the inclination against involvement in counterinsurgencies seemed to outweigh the need for a sufficient counterinsurgent capability. Relatively little emphasis was given to preparation for this form of conflict, either in assisting other governments to help themselves or in developing American capabilities for more direct involvement.

There has been developing, however, gradual recognition that involvement in small wars is not only likely, it is upon us. It would seem wise, therefore, to come to grips with what appears to be an emerging fact for the US military, that American involvement in low-intensity conflict is unavoidable given the more assertive US foreign policy of recent years and the developments in many Third World countries, particularly those in our own hemisphere. It would be timely to seek ways to assist allies in counterinsurgency operations, ways consistent with the constraints of the American political culture and system, as well as with the institutional agendas of the military services.<sup>56</sup> One conclusion may be that in some cases, contrary to the lessons of Vietnam, it would be better to use American soldiers in small numbers than in strength to help a foreign government counter insurgents. Indeed, given the example of congressional limits on the number of trainers in El Salvador, the Army in particular should be figuring out how best to assist others within what might be anticipated as similar limits in other situations, while always remembering that it is the host country's war to win or lose.

Given that conclusion, the military should look beyond critiques of American involvement in Vietnam that focus exclusively on alternative conventional military strategies that might have been pursued. For all their value, such studies seldom address important unconventional elements of struggles such as Vietnam (although, of course, what eventually defeated South Vietnam was a massive invasion by North Vietnam forces) and several contemporary theaters. As Professor John Gates wrote in a 1984 *Parameters* article,

Any analysis that denies the important revolutionary dimension of the Vietnam conflict is misleading, leaving the American people, their leaders, and their professionals inadequately prepared to deal with similar problems in the future . . . . Instead of forcing the military to come to grips with the problems of revolutionary warfare that now exist in nations such as Guatemala or El

Salvador, [such an] analysis leads officers back into the conventional war model that provided so little preparation for solving the problems faced in Indochina by the French, the Americans, and their Vietnamese allies. Such a business-as-usual approach is much too complacent in a world plagued by the unconventional warfare associated with revolution and attempts to counter it.<sup>57</sup>

The most serious charge leveled at the lessons of Vietnam is made by those who perceive them as promising national paralysis in the face of international provocation. This contention is also the most difficult to contend with because of its generality. The argument is that insistence upon domestic consensus before employing US forces is too demanding a requirement—that if it were rigorously applied it would, in the words of former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger, “virtually assure other powers that they can count on not facing American forces.” Schlesinger goes on to explain:

The likeliest physical challenges to the United States come in the third world—not in Europe or North America. If the more predatory states in the third world are given assurance that they can employ, directly or indirectly, physical force against American interests with impunity, they will feel far less restraint in acting against our interests. Americans historically have embraced crusades—such as World War II—as well as glorious little wars. The difficulty is that the most likely conflicts of the future fall between crusades and such brief encounters as Grenada and Mayaguez. Yet these in-between conflicts have weak public support. Even . . . with national unity and at the height of our power public enthusiasm for Korea and Vietnam evaporated in just a year or two. The problem is that virtually no opportunity exists for future crusades—and those glorious wars are likely to occur infrequently. The role of the United States in the world is such that it must be prepared for, be prepared to threaten, and even be prepared to fight those intermediate conflicts—that are likely to fare poorly on television.<sup>58</sup>

As Schlesinger was quick to acknowledge, however, there is no ready solution to the perplexities he described. Nor are there clear-cut solutions to the other ambiguities that reside in the lessons of Vietnam. The only certainty seems to be that searching reflection about what ought to be taken from America's experience in Vietnam should continue, for only with further examination will thoughtful understanding replace visceral revulsion when we think about America's difficulties in Vietnam.

### CONCLUSIONS

History in general, and the American experience in Vietnam in particular, have much to teach us, but both must be used with discretion and neither should be pushed too far.<sup>59</sup> In particular, the Vietnam analogy, for all its value as the most recent large-scale use of American force abroad, has limits. The applicability of the lessons drawn from Vietnam, just like the applicability of lessons taken from any other past event, always will depend on the contextual circumstances. We should avoid the trap of considering only the Vietnam analogy, and not allow it to overshadow unduly other historical events that appear to offer insight and perspective.

Nor should Vietnam be permitted to become such a dominant influence in the minds of decision-makers that it inhibits the discussion of specific events on their own merits. It would be more profitable to address the central issues of any particular case that arises than to debate endlessly whether the situation could evolve into "another Vietnam." In their use of history politicians and military planners alike would do well to recall David Fischer's finding that "the utility of historical knowledge consists . . . in the enlargement of substantive contexts within which decisions are made, . . . in the refinement of a thought structure which is indispensable to purposeful decisionmaking."<sup>60</sup>

Thus we should beware literal application of lessons extracted from Vietnam, or any other past event, to present or future problems without due regard for the specific circumstances that surround those problems. Study of Vietnam—and of other historical

occurrences—should endeavor to gain perspective and understanding, rather than hard and fast lessons that might be applied too easily without proper reflection and sufficiently rigorous analysis. "Each historical situation is unique," George Herring has warned, "and the use of analogy is at best misleading, at worst, dangerous."<sup>61</sup>

### NOTES

1. Quoted in Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau, *American Leadership in World Affairs* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1984), p. 25.
2. Richard K. Betts, *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977), p. 164.
3. Quoted in *No More Vietnams?* ed. by Richard M. Pfeffer (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 4.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
5. The best of the works that establish the influence of history on decision-makers is Ernest R. May's "*Lessons of the Past*" (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978). Others include: Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time* (New York: Free Press, 1986); Robert Jervis, *Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Politics* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), especially chapter six, "How Decision-Makers Learn From History"; Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1980), pp. 42-53, 60-61; Stanley Karnow, "Vietnam As an Analogy," *The New York Times*, 4 October 1983, p. A27; and Holsti and Rosenau, pp. 3-10.
6. Paul M. Kattenburg, *The Vietnam Trauma in American Foreign Policy, 1945-1975* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1980), p. 317.
7. Quoted in George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy*, p. 45.
8. Leslie H. Gelb, "The Mind of the President," *The New York Times Magazine*, 6 October 1985, p. 28.
9. Glenn D. Paige, "Comparative Case Analysis of Crisis Decisions: Korea and Cuba," in *International Crises: Insights From Behavioral Research*, ed. Charles F. Hermann (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 48. Paige's finding was confirmed in Michael Brecher, with Benjamin Geist, *Decisions in Crisis* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1980), p. 343.
10. May, "*Lessons of the Past*," p. xi.
11. Cited in Holsti and Rosenau, *American Leadership in World Affairs*, p. 8.
12. See, for example, Abraham Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1972), p. 161.
13. Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, p. 281.
14. May, "*Lessons of the Past*," p. xi.
15. Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, p. 281.
16. Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Bitter Heritage: Vietnam and American Democracy, 1941-1946* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett Crest, 1967), p. 98.
17. Lloyd Jensen, *Explaining Foreign Policy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1982), p. 39. See also May, "*Lessons of the Past*," p. xi; Lowenthal, *The Dominican Intervention*, p. 162; and John D. Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974), pp. 65-71.

18. George Santayana, *The Life of Reason* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, one-volume edition, 1953), p. 82. Schlesinger, *The Bitter Heritage*, p. 102.

19. See William J. Taylor and David H. Petraeus, "The Legacy of Vietnam for the American Military," in *Vietnam: Did It Make A Difference?* ed. George Osborn et al. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, forthcoming in 1986). See also: Richard Halloran, "Vietnam Consequences: Quiet From the Military," *The New York Times*, 2 May 1983, p. A16; Drew Middleton, "U.S. Generals Are Leery of Latin Intervention," *The New York Times*, 21 June 1983, p. A9; Walter S. Mossberg, "The Army Resists a Salvadoran Vietnam," *The Wall Street Journal*, 24 June 1983, p. 22; Joanne Omang, "New Army Chief Doesn't See Widening Latin Involvement," *The Washington Post*, 9 August 1983, p. A10; Philip Taubman, "General Doubts G.I. Role in Salvador," *The New York Times*, 2 August 1984, p. A3; Richard Halloran, "General Opposes Nicaragua Attacks," *The New York Times*, 30 June 1985, p. A3; and George C. Wilson, "Generals Who Contradict the Contras," *The Washington Post*, 13 April 1986, p. C2.

Military advice on the Marine peacekeeping mission in Lebanon also appeared to be influenced by the experience in Vietnam. See, for example, Steven V. Roberts, "War Powers Debate Reflects Its Origin," *The New York Times*, 2 October 1983, p. E4; Bill Keller, "Military Reportedly Opposed Use of U.S. Marines in Beirut," *The New York Times*, 22 August 1985, p. A6; Patrick J. Sloyan, "Lebanon: Anatomy of a Foreign Policy Failure," *Newsday*, 8 April 1984, pp. 4-5, 34-39; Roy Gutman, "Division at the Top Meant Half-Measures," *Newsday*, 8 April 1984, pp. 36-37; and William Greider, "Retreat From Beirut," an episode in the Public Broadcasting System series *Frontline*, shown on 26 February 1985.

20. See John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (New York: John Wiley, 1973), pp. 42-65, 168-75.

21. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1945), I, 237.

22. Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944* (Washington: Department of the Army, 1959), p. 5.

23. See, for example, Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., "Past As Prologue: Counterinsurgency and the U.S. Army's Vietnam Experience in Force Structuring and Doctrine," in *Vietnam: Did It Make A Difference?*

24. The overwhelming acceptance of civilian control is illustrated in "A Newsweek Poll: The Military Mind," *Newsweek*, 9 July 1984, p. 37.

25. See, for example, Victor H. Krulak, *Organization for National Security* (Washington: US Strategic Institute, 1983), pp. 81-102; Stephan P. Rosen, "Vietnam and the American Theory of Limited War," *International Security*, 7 (Fall 1982), 100-03; Krepinevich, "Past As Prologue"; and Frank A. Burdick, "Vietnam Revisited: The Military Campaign Against Civilian Control," *Democracy*, 2 (January 1982), 36-52.

26. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1957), pp. 69-70.

27. William A. Knowlton, "Ethics and Decision-Making," address delivered at the US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., 22 October 1984, p. 28 of transcript (cited with permission of General Knowlton). Similarly, a "senior officer" told *The New York Times*' Richard Halloran: "We were the scapegoats of that conflict. We're the ones pulling back on the reins on [Central America]." Halloran, "Vietnam Consequences: Quiet From the Military," *The New York Times*, 2 May 1983, p. A16.

28. Thus retired General Maxwell Taylor described the "great difficulty in rallying this country behind a foreign issue

involving the use of armed force, which does not provide an identified enemy posing a clear threat to our homeland or the vital interests of long time friends." See his "Post-Vietnam Role of the Military in Foreign Policy," in *Contemporary American Foreign and Military Policy*, ed. Burton M. Sapin (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman, 1970), pp. 36-43. For similar views expressed by General John Vessey before his recent retirement from the post of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, see Richard Halloran, "Reflections on 46 Years of Army Service," *The New York Times*, 3 September 1985, p. A18.

29. As former Secretary of State Alexander Haig wrote: "The Joint Chiefs of Staff, chastened by Vietnam . . . resisted a major commitment in [Central America]. I sensed, and understood, a doubt on the part of the military in the political will of the civilians at the top to follow through to the end on such a commitment." See Haig's *Caveat* (New York: MacMillan, 1984), p. 128.

30. There appears to be a muted debate under way, particularly within the Army, over whether American forces should be used in counterinsurgency operations at all, and if so, how they should be structured. Some officers feel that US forces are not well suited for such operations. As one senior officer who commanded a battalion in Vietnam advised: "Remember, we're watchdogs you unchain to eat the burglar. Don't ask us to be mayors or sociologists worrying about hearts and minds. Let us eat up the burglar in our own way and then put us back on the leash." Quoted in George C. Wilson, "War's Lessons Struck Home," *The Washington Post*, 16 April 1985, p. A9. Similar sentiments were expressed by a Navy Admiral who advised the US Military Academy's 1985 Senior Conference that the primary task of the military is to put "ordnance on target." See John D. Morrocco, "Vietnam's Legacy: U.S. More Cautious In Using force," *Army Times*, 1 July 1985, p. 42. See also, the letter to the editor of *Military Review* by Francisco J. Pedrozo, 66 (January 1986), 81-82. Others worry that the American people will not support extended US involvement in a "small war." Lastly, there remain a few military officers who cling to the notion that no special capability is needed because big units can invariably handle small wars—that, in the words of General Curtis LeMay (Air Force Chief of Staff in the early 1960s), "If you can lick the cat, you can lick the kitten" (attributed to LeMay in William W. Kaufmann, "Force Planning and Vietnam," in *Vietnam: Did It Make a Difference?*).

31. Drew Middleton, "Vietnam and the Military Mind," *The New York Times*, 10 January 1982, p. 90. See also Richard Halloran, "For Military Leaders, the Shadow of Vietnam," *The New York Times*, 20 March 1984, p. B10.

One may ask whether American military leaders have not always held such views, and question, therefore, whether the so-called lessons of Vietnam are really anything new. This was the reaction of retired General Edward C. Meyer, former Army Chief of Staff, to a draft paper that discussed the lessons of Vietnam in a similar vein (Taylor and Petraeus, "The Legacy of Vietnam for the American Military"). Other senior officers have expressed similar sentiments when queried by journalists about the impact of Vietnam. General John Vessey on several occasions maintained that "his attitudes toward the use of military force were largely unaffected by the U.S. experience in Vietnam." See P. J. Budahn, "Vessey Sees Need to Ease Up-or-Out Policy," *Army Times*, 16 September 1985, pp. 4, 26; and Harry G. Summers, Jr., "American Military in 'A Race to Prevent War,'" *U.S. News and World Report*, 21 October 1985, p. 40.

32. Paraphrased from Richard K. Betts, "Misadventure Revisited," *The Wilson Quarterly*, 7 (Summer 1983), 99.

33. George C. Wilson, "War's Lessons Struck Home," *The Washington Post*, 16 April 1985, p. A9.

34. George C. Wilson, "Top U.S. Brass Wary on



Central America," *The Washington Post*, 24 June 1983, p. A20.

35. Bruce Palmer, *The 25-Year War* (Lexington, Ky.: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1984), p. 204. See also the quotation of General Frederick C. Weyand in Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: US Army War College, 1981), p. 25.

36. Palmer, *The 25-Year War*, p. 194; and Wilson, "Top U.S. Brass Wary on Central America." In fact, it appears that senior Army leaders since Vietnam have sought an active component force that makes, in the words of former Army Chief of Staff Meyer, "except for the most modest contingency, a callup of Reserves . . . an absolute necessity." See the collection of General Meyer's speeches and articles published by the Department of the Army in 1983, p. 314. On this see also Michael R. Gordon, "The Charge of the Light Infantry—Army Plans Forces for Third World Conflict," *National Journal*, 19 May 1984, p. 972; and Summers, *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context*, p. 113.

37. Richard Halloran, "Reflections on 46 Years of Army Service," *The New York Times*, 3 September 1985, p. A18.

38. Richard Halloran, "A Commanding Voice for the Military," *The New York Times Magazine*, 15 July 1984, p. 52.

39. Stanley Karnow, "Vietnam As An Analogy," *The New York Times*, 4 October 1983, p. A27. On this point, see Hans Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 144. For an illustrative, though now somewhat dated, analysis of the differences between El Salvador and Vietnam, see George C. Herring, "Vietnam, El Salvador, and the Uses of History," in *The Central American Crisis*, ed. Kenneth M. Coleman and George C. Herring (Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources, 1985), pp. 97-110.

40. In a November 1984 speech titled "The Uses of Military Power," Secretary of Defense Weinberger outlined six tests that he said would apply when deciding whether to send military forces into combat abroad. His six tests are very similar to the lessons drawn by the military from Vietnam. See "Excerpts From Address of Weinberger," *The New York Times*, 29 November 1984, p. A5; and Richard Halloran, "U.S. Will Not Drift Into A Latin War, Weinberger Says," *The New York Times*, 29 November 1984, pp. A1, A4.

41. A recent article by George F. Kennan contained a similar admonishment. See his "Morality and Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, 64 (Winter 1985/86), 205-18.

42. Paul Kattenburg makes a particularly good case for this in *The Vietnam Trauma in American Foreign Policy, 1945-1975* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1980), p. 321.

43. Mark Twain (Samuel L. Clemens), *Following the Equator: A Journey Around the World* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1899), p. 125.

44. Robert E. Osgood, *Limited War Revisited* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1979), p. 50.

45. See, for example, George Fielding Eliot, "Next Time We'll Have to Get There Faster," *Army*, 20 (April 1970), 32-36.

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

47. The best example of these close philosophical ties is Secretary Weinberger's November 1984 speech, "The Uses of Military Power." See note 40.

48. Eliot A. Cohen, "Constraints on America's Conduct of Small Wars," *International Security*, 9 (Fall 1984), 170. Richard Betts has observed that American military leaders in Vietnam "recognized the political complexity of the war but insisted on dividing the labor, leaving the politics to the

civilians and concentrating themselves on actual combat." See his *Soldiers, Statesmen, and Cold War Crises* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977), p. 138.

49. Phrase suggested by Lieutenant Colonel Daniel J. Kaufman.

50. This sentiment is clearly evident, for example, in Halloran, "Vietnam Consequences: Quiet From the Military."

51. There is some evidence of such feelings. A recent article by Tom Donnelly in *Army Times* (1 July 1985, pp. 41-43), for example, was descriptively titled "Special Operations Still a Military Stepchild." See also "A Warrior Elite For the Dirty Jobs," *Time*, 13 January 1986, p. 18.

52. Some journalists reported that the military was slow in planning for contingencies in Central America. See George C. Wilson, "U.S. Urged to Meet Honduran Requests," *The Washington Post*, 20 June 1983, p. A4; and Doyle McManus, "U.S. Draws Contingency Plans for Air Strikes in El Salvador," *The Washington Post*, 13 July 1984, p. A27.

53. Joseph C. Goulden, *Korea: The Untold Story of the War* (New York: Times Books, 1982), pp. 57-58; and T. R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War: A Study of Unpreparedness* (New York: MacMillan, 1963). Senior military men took from Korea the necessity to have a force structure flexible enough to respond to such unanticipated decisions. See the comments of Lieutenant General Vernon Walters on this in Summers, *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context*, p. 120.

54. Among the many sources that make this point, see Robert H. Kupperman and William J. Taylor, eds. *Strategic Requirements for the Army to the Year 2000* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1984), esp. pp. 51-69, 125-42, and 171-86; Fred K. Mahaffey, "Structuring Forces to Need," *Army*, 34 (October 1984), 204-16; and Richard H. Shultz, Jr., and Alan N. Sabrosky, "Policy and Strategy for the 1980s: Preparing for Low Intensity Conflict," in *Lessons From an Unconventional War*, ed. Richard A. Hunt and Richard H. Shultz, Jr. (New York: Pergamon Press, 1982), pp. 191-227.

55. These tensions are well described in Tom Donnelly, "Special Operations Still a Military Stepchild," *Army Times*, 1 July 1985, pp. 41-43.

56. As this article was being completed several steps in this direction were taken. The most significant were: a high-level conference on low-intensity conflict conducted 14-15 January 1986 at Fort McNair, Washington, D.C.; a joint study of low-intensity conflict undertaken by the US Army's Training and Doctrine Command; announcement of Army and Navy plans to build up their special operations capabilities over the next five years; and announcement of a joint Air Force and Army examination of their ability to deal with low-intensity conflict. See Daniel Greene, "Conferees Face Challenges of Low-Level Wars," *Army Times*, 27 January 1986, pp. 2, 26; Larry Carney, "Army Plans 5-Year Expansion of Special Operations Forces," *Army Times*, 30 December 1985, p. 4; "Navy's SEAL Force to Grow to 2,700 by 1990," *Army Times*, 2 December 1985, p. 50; and Leonard Famiglietti, "Army-Air Force Team to Study Low-Intensity Conflict," *Army Times*, 9 December 1985, pp. 59, 60.

57. John M. Gates, "Vietnam: The Debate Goes On," *Parameters*, 14 (Spring 1984), 24-25.

58. "Excerpts from Schlesinger's Senate Testimony," *The New York Times*, 7 February 1985, p. A14.

59. George Herring advanced a similar conclusion in "Vietnam, El Salvador, and Uses of History," p. 108.

60. David H. Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 157.

61. Herring, "Vietnam, El Salvador, and Uses of History," p. 110.

# ON OUR CONDUCT OF THE VIETNAM WAR: A REVIEW ESSAY OF TWO NEW WORKS

by

RICHARD A. HUNT

**Bureaucracy at War: U.S. Performance in the Vietnam Conflict.** By Robert W. Komer. 174 pages. Westview Press, Boulder, Colo., 1986. \$17.50.

**War Without Fronts: The American Experience in Vietnam.** By Thomas Thayer. 276 pages. Westview Special Studies, Westview Press, Boulder, Colo., 1985. \$22.00 (paper).

Within recent years, General Bruce Palmer and Colonel Harry Summers have written widely discussed analyses of the Vietnam debacle that have become the touchstones of most recent debate.<sup>1</sup> Each seeks to understand why America failed to defeat the communist side and raises questions about the nature of the war and the way the United States fought. Although Palmer and Summers offer individual interpretations, both argue that the United States should have focused its military efforts against North Vietnam, whose invading divisions crushed South Vietnam's army in 1975. According to Summers, "Instead of focusing our attention on the external enemy, North Vietnam—the source of the war—we [the United States] turned our attention to the symptom—the guerrilla war in the south—and limited our attacks on the North to air and sea actions only."<sup>2</sup> Thus, the strategy of counterinsurgency constituted a mistaken response that diverted the United States from taking more effective military action against North Vietnam.<sup>3</sup> In General Palmer's book,

he argued for stationing an international military force along the DMZ that would have driven into Laos and cut off the North Vietnamese army's infiltration into South Vietnam.<sup>4</sup> He does not dismiss pacification, or counterinsurgency, as Summers does, but only treats it in passing.

Into this continuing discussion about the American role in Vietnam comes a "revised and updated" monograph, *Bureaucracy at War*, by Robert W. Komer, who played an important role in the pacification program. This work advances the argument he first made in his 1972 study for the Rand Corporation, "Bureaucracy Does Its Thing." In its new format, his argument deserves as much attention as the books by Palmer and Summers have received. Relying heavily on the so-called *Pentagon Papers*, memoirs of policymakers, the secondary literature of the Kennedy and Johnson years, as well as insights gained as a participant in many of the debates over policy and strategy, Komer compellingly develops a broad and provocative thesis.

Komer's starting point is similar to Summers': why did such a vast expenditure of American military and financial resources yield such meager results? But he soon parts company with the author of *On Strategy*, characterizing American neglect of counterinsurgency, largely called pacification, as one reason for poor performance. Policymakers in Washington seemed to recognize the importance of counterinsurgency but had

difficulty in the 1950s and 1960s getting South Vietnamese or American civilian and military agencies to carry out an integrated counterinsurgency strategy and programs. Institutional constraints, the military and the civilian agencies "playing out their institutional repertoires," to use Komer's phrase, led them to carry out the kinds of activities they were trained to accomplish instead of adapting missions, organizations, and programs to counteract the unusual political and military threat of the Vietnamese communists.

Komer peppers his book with examples of bureaucracies doing what came naturally. The American Army trained the South Vietnamese army as a conventional military force. Consequently, training, equipping, and advising the paramilitary forces were neglected until 1967, relatively late in the war. This neglect was also one cause of President Diem's failure to defeat the insurgency.

After American combat units entered the war, the US Army mounted search-and-destroy operations to engage and kill enemy "main forces." The Army relied on attrition because it had superior mobility, firepower, and resources which would allow it to wear down its foe. As Komer puts it, "Armies like to fight other armies." The American military command in Vietnam "tended to focus all the more on the 'big unit' war to the neglect of other facets of the conflict." It was less comfortable carrying out clear-and-hold operations, which would have helped provide a shield for pacification to get underway and which Komer believes were a more suitable response to the insurgency.

Likewise, "the air forces pressed to do what they knew best: to mount massive bombing campaigns both in the South and against the North," reflecting then current doctrine on how to employ air power.<sup>6</sup> Although Komer concedes the bombing was not carried out the way its advocates wished, he argues that the results of the air war were limited largely because North Vietnam, with few industries or other militarily lucrative targets, was not as vulnerable to air attack as our previous military experience tended to suggest.<sup>7</sup> He may be pushing his point too far

when he suggests that we conducted a major bombing campaign of interdiction simply because we had the capability to do so, but it is probably true that the Air Force would have carried out the air war differently in the absence of the B-52 bomber.

Komer is seeking to understand American performance, not looking for scapegoats. He attributes much of the American failure to obtain results in Vietnam to the way large civilian and military bureaucracies constrained the thinking and practices of their leadership and rank and file, making it difficult for them to adapt to a unique challenge. Protecting their individual domains, agencies resisted attempts to have them pool their efforts with other offices and reduce duplicated programs. Government bureaucracies also were reluctant to yield authority over programs in the interest of unity of management. The absence of a single manager in Washington or Saigon, short of the President, to oversee the activities of the armed services and a host of civilian agencies was a critical shortcoming of the US conduct of the war.

One example Komer cites of a moderately successful American adaptation to the peculiar needs of the war is the organization he helped establish and then managed, CORDS (Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support). This organization, located in South Vietnam and composed of

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soldiers and civilians from the State Department, AID, and the CIA, provided under Komer's leadership unified management of American support of South Vietnam's pacification program, and it led to a significant expansion of the money, men, and materiel devoted to the "other war."

Komer's message on the advantage of organizational change to meet new challenges is clear, but unfortunately he chooses not to document the case for CORDS' success,<sup>8</sup> which is presented almost as a given. In outline, his argument is that CORDS solved serious management and organizational problems of pacification support, and thus the South Vietnamese pacification program enjoyed some success. To detail systematically what CORDS accomplished may have exposed Komer to charges of self-promotion and parochialism, but it would have strengthened his argument considerably. The skeptical reader may find it difficult to accept at face value his assertions about CORDS' success.

Komer's thesis raises questions about the other parties to the war. In his view, the Americans lost partly because of the flawed nature of our ally, South Vietnam. Komer is right to criticize South Vietnam's shortcomings, which seriously impeded American military and civilian efforts, and he implies that perhaps the United States was doomed to fail because of our ally's inadequacies.<sup>9</sup> If that judgment is correct, then solving the organizational and doctrinal problems of American bureaucracies could be interpreted as irrelevant to the outcome of the war.

Although at no time does Komer imply that if we had more effectively tailored our forces and organizations we could have won the war, he does not seem to have taken sufficient cognizance of the enemy's adaptability and dogged retention of the initiative throughout most of the war.

**T**hayer's book, a unique contribution to Vietnam War studies, makes a convincing case that the US Army did not fight as a counterinsurgent force, and that the enemy was to a great extent able to control

the pace of the fighting as well as his losses and thus hold the initiative.<sup>10</sup> He also presents the kind of evidence that Komer could have used to elaborate his case for pacification's success after 1967.

The author served as Director of the Southeast Asia Division in the Defense Department's Office of Systems Analysis from 1967 to 1972. While in that position he helped compile operational data on many aspects of the war. Much of Thayer's analysis originally appeared monthly in a classified Defense Department publication, the *South-east Asia Analysis Reports*, and was contemporaneous with the events described. That publication did not please everyone. Articles critical of pacification drew Komer's ire, and critiques of the attrition strategy and the air interdiction campaign at times sorely vexed Army and Air Force brass. The appearance of this material, important in its own right, is also significant for presenting in some detail the informed critique of the air war and of attrition that civilian Pentagon officials made in the midst of the war. The publication of this work in the public domain allows it to reach a wider audience.

To Thayer, the war had two salient characteristics. First, unlike World War II and Korea, the Vietnam War was a war without front lines, which made it difficult to understand. Second, to understand the war it was necessary to discern the patterns underlying the fighting, a task requiring the systematic analysis of statistical data.<sup>11</sup>

Thayer's carefully accumulated data on the casualty rates suffered by South Vietnamese and American forces and the kind and number of enemy attacks reveal that most enemy actions were small in scale. Battalion-sized attacks, which were a more serious threat than raids and political harassment, constituted a slim percentage (3.7) of all enemy ground assaults.<sup>12</sup> Even in 1972, a year of unusually heavy conventional fighting during the Easter Offensive, enemy ground assaults and indirect attacks by fire amounted to only 21 percent of all enemy-initiated incidents.<sup>13</sup> The preponderance of the enemy's effort throughout the war, as

measured by Thayer's statistics, was weighted toward political coercion, terrorism, sabotage, and indirect attacks by fire.<sup>14</sup> The purpose of this pattern of activity was to wear down the internal security forces of South Vietnam—its police, militia, and territorial forces providing population security. Casualty figures also support the contention that the communists concentrated on weakening Saigon's security forces. With the exception of 1968, the Regional and Popular Forces protecting the villages and districts of South Vietnam had a higher combat death rate than the South Vietnamese army. The combat death rate for the RF/PF was also higher than for American units.<sup>15</sup> Thayer's figures lead inexorably to the conclusion that the insurgency was no sideshow to the main-force war, but an integral part of the communist strategy to defeat the Saigon government. Rather than a wrong-headed obsession as Summers alleges, the American concern with pacification, as limited as it was, was essential to the defeat of the communists.

That the United States neglected to focus its military effort on the source is another Summers assertion that is not borne out by Thayer's data. Most of the money, according to Thayer, went to fund expensive military activities, the air war and the attrition campaigns, which were largely directed against North Vietnamese military units and installations and which proved ineffective. According to data for Fiscal Year 1969, the preponderance of American expenditures went to finance the air war (47 percent), largely an interdiction effort that failed to stem the infiltration of men and supplies from North Vietnam, and the ground forces' war of attrition (30 percent), which, Thayer argues, failed to prevent the other side from exercising considerable control over its own rate of losses, from replacing its losses, or from retaining the strategic initiative inside South Vietnam.<sup>16</sup>

That is not to say that attrition and bombing did not seriously hurt the communists. They certainly did, but these flawed instruments, as used by the United States, were insufficient to defeat North Vietnam's military and were not integral to the key

effort to build a strong South Vietnamese government and military that could compete with the communists. Not enough funds or attention were devoted to the pacification program (less than five percent in 1969), even though its goal was central to American policy.<sup>17</sup> Thayer's conclusion from his data underscores Komer's thesis: large American organizations involved in the war "tended to play out their institutional repertoires instead of making major adaptations to meet the situations they faced."<sup>18</sup>

Thayer's statistics should form a logical starting point for discussion of how the war was fought and what was achieved. Although skepticism may be warranted for specific statistics, Thayer's argument rests on the long-term patterns and trends his data disclose, some of which he believes duplicate the experience of the French in their war against the North. Additional research may invalidate or modify some of his conclusions, but to my knowledge no one else has yet even tried to assess systematically our performance in Vietnam. The time has come to understand what really happened in the war and heed the lessons. Thayer's study is a valuable starting place.

#### NOTES

1. Bruce Palmer, Jr., *The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam* (Lexington: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1984); Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: USAWC, 1981).
2. Summers, p. 65.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
4. Palmer, pp. 183-85.
5. Robert W. Komer, *Bureaucracy at War: U.S. Performance in the Vietnam Conflict* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1986), p. 49.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
8. In an article written before the war ended, Komer made the case for the success of the pacification program. See his "Pacification Impact on Insurgency," *Journal of International Affairs*, 25 (No. 1, 1971), 48-68.
9. Komer, *Bureaucracy of War*, p. 22.
10. Thomas Thayer, *War Without Fronts: The American Experience in Vietnam* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1985), pp. 92-93.
11. *Ibid.*, p. xxiii.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 45-48.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 119, 163.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

# MacARTHUR'S FIREMAN: ROBERT L. EICHELBERGER

by

JOHN F. SHORTAL

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To millions of people the name Douglas MacArthur evokes the image of a brilliant, confident, and supremely successful combat commander. In the 41 years that have elapsed since the last campaign of World War II, his victories have come to be viewed as quick, smooth, and simple operations against an impoverished foe. However, hindsight has obscured the tenacity of the Japanese and the immense difficulties MacArthur encountered in the Southwest Pacific. Not all of his victories were quick and easy; the Japanese did not quit upon request. In three major campaigns—Buna in December 1942, Biak in June 1944, and Manila in January 1945—MacArthur suffered initial setbacks from the Japanese. In each case, he was forced to call in a fireman to rally American troops and salvage desperate tactical situations. MacArthur always used the same fireman to handle his most difficult missions, Lieutenant General Robert Lawrence Eichelberger. In each case, Eichelberger's combination of tactical innovation, commonsense training, and personal leadership produced dramatic results.

MacArthur was a legendary field commander. Robert Eichelberger, on the other hand, did not fit the Hollywood image of a general. He was not young, handsome, or tough-talking. He did not wear specially designed uniforms or use theatrics calculated to impress his troops. Rather, by 1944 he was a 58-year-old man who, although in excellent

physical condition, was slightly overweight and concerned about his waistline.<sup>1</sup> What Eichelberger did have going for him was an iron will, a strong concept of duty, a warm sense of humor,<sup>2</sup> and an innovative tactical ability. He never failed to conquer any assigned objective.

The story of MacArthur's problem at Buna is well known. His first offensive of the war was in grave jeopardy in November 1942, when an insufficiently trained American division had been stymied and demoralized by the Japanese. Douglas MacArthur, whose pride had been severely wounded in the recent Philippines campaign, had no other reserves in the theater. Furthermore, the poor performance of this division caused the Australians to question the fighting abilities of American soldiers. To salvage this desperate tactical situation and to breathe new life into the American soldiers at Buna, MacArthur summoned Eichelberger from Australia. On the evening of 30 November 1942, MacArthur issued one of the most famous operations orders in American military history. He said:

Bob, I'm putting you in command at Buna. Relieve Harding. I am sending you in, Bob, and I want you to remove all officers who won't fight. Relieve Regimental and Battalion commanders; if necessary, put Sergeants in charge of Battalions and Corporals in charge of companies—anyone who will fight. Time is of the essence; the

Japs may land reinforcements any night . . . . I want you to take Buna, or not come back alive.<sup>3</sup>

Thirty-two days later this American division, whose fighting capabilities had been questioned, conquered Buna. The capture of Buna was MacArthur's first ground victory of World War II. It was a closely fought battle in which he was forced to take on an enemy who held all the advantages in equipment, training, and experience. MacArthur had few troops at his disposal, and the much-discussed industrial capacity of the United States had not yet manifested itself in this theater.<sup>4</sup> The margin between victory and defeat at Buna was the dynamic and inspirational leadership of Robert Eichelberger. An eyewitness later described Eichelberger's contribution as follows:

You were sent at the eleventh hour to salvage an impossible situation without any assistance except your own intelligence and your own force of character . . . . While I was with you I was convinced that if the troops under your command did not go into Buna, you would have unhesitatingly gone in there alone.<sup>5</sup>

Although Buna is the most well-known example of MacArthur's use of Eichelberger's formidable leadership talents, it was not the only one.

#### MacARTHUR'S SECOND PROBLEM: BIAK

The conclusion of the Buna campaign in January 1943 secured the eastern portion of New Guinea for the Allies. In order to carry the Allied offensive into the Philippines, MacArthur had to isolate the powerful Japanese base at Rabaul and then move up the northern coast of New Guinea. Throughout 1943, MacArthur conducted a series of brilliant operations which cut the Japanese line of communication to Rabaul. This enabled him to neutralize completely the Japanese forces at this location without conducting a bloody frontal assault. How-

ever, by January 1944 MacArthur had moved only 240 miles north of Buna and still had 2240 miles to go before reaching Manila.<sup>6</sup> In order to bring the war to a more rapid conclusion, MacArthur decided to conduct a series of deeper amphibious envelopments up the northern coast of New Guinea.<sup>7</sup>

By late May 1944 MacArthur had moved up the northern coast of New Guinea as far as the Island of Biak, which was within bomber range of the Philippines (800 miles), and within fighter range of the Japanese airfields on Palau.<sup>8</sup> MacArthur had cut through the Japanese defenses with skill. The amphibious envelopments at Saidor (2 January), Aitape and Hollandia (22 April), and Wakde (17 May) were great successes. George C. Marshall even called the Hollandia operation a "model of strategic and tactical maneuvers."<sup>9</sup>

At Biak, unfortunately, MacArthur's luck ran out. Biak was important because the Japanese had built three airfields on the island, and MacArthur hoped to use these airfields to launch bombing missions against Japanese bases in the Philippines. Since he expected the task force to have seized and built up at least one airfield by 10 June, he had promised to support Admiral Nimitz's operation at Saipan in the Marianas on 15 June 1944 with aircraft from these airfields.<sup>10</sup>

At 0715 hours on 27 May 1944, Major General Horace Fuller and two regiments (186th and 162nd Infantry) of the 41st Division landed at Biak. The Japanese offered no resistance at the beaches, and the initial landings were a complete success.<sup>11</sup>

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General Fuller's plan called for the 162nd Regiment to move along the beach road, which ran at the base of a steep cliff, to the three airfields. Meanwhile, the 186th Regiment would move on a parallel route through the mountains.<sup>12</sup> In the first two days General Fuller's forces moved quickly, covering eight miles along the beach road, which brought them within 1000 yards of the first airfield (Mokmer Drome).<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, MacArthur's staff had seriously underestimated the Japanese defensive capability on the island. Instead of the 4380 Japanese troops they had anticipated, more than 11,000 Japanese soldiers were at Biak. In December 1943, the Japanese high command had sent the veteran 222nd Infantry Regiment of the 36th Division to Biak. This unit was commanded by Colonel Naoyuki Kuzume and reinforced with elements of the 221st Infantry and the 2nd Development Unit.<sup>14</sup> Colonel Kuzume was described in an American after-action report as "a soldier of the highest calibre and a tactician compelling respect."<sup>15</sup> For five months he had carefully prepared his defenses.

Colonel Kuzume had astutely assessed the Allied objective as the three airfields along the southern coast of Biak. Therefore, he skillfully emplaced his forces in the coral ridges above the coastal road which ran from Mandom to the Mokmer airfield. He also positioned troops in the compartmented ridge systems 1000 yards north-northwest of the Mokmer airfield. The terrain, including many caves, complemented the interlocking ridge network which not only dominated the coastal road and three airfields, but provided concealed emplacements for the enemy's artillery, mortars, and machine guns.<sup>16</sup>

On 29 May, Colonel Kuzume counterattacked three times with two battalions of infantry supported by tanks and artillery fire against the 162nd Infantry positions. In the four-hour fight, the American forces neutralized eight Japanese tanks and destroyed the better part of a Japanese battalion. However, the Japanese were successful in driving the 162nd Infantry back two miles east of the Mokmer airfield and forcing them onto the defensive.<sup>17</sup> General

Fuller requested and received the 163rd Infantry Regiment to reinforce his task force. With this support, General Fuller was again able to mount an offensive and by 8 June had finally seized his first airfield, Mokmer. However, the Air Corps could not use the field because Japanese gunfire completely controlled it.<sup>18</sup>

On 14 June 1944, the tactical situation of General Fuller's Hurricane Task Force was bleak. In 19 days of combat they had succeeded in seizing only a single Japanese airfield, one that could not be used by Allied air forces. Furthermore, Admiral Nimitz's forces would go ashore at Saipan on 15 June without Southwest Pacific air support because the Hurricane Task Force had failed in its principal mission.<sup>19</sup>

The Biak operation had become a personal embarrassment to MacArthur; he had been caught in exaggerations to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and to the American public. On 28 May, after General Fuller's initial success, General MacArthur had announced that the impending fall of Biak "marks the practical end of the New Guinea campaign." On 1 June, MacArthur's communique announced that Japanese resistance "was collapsing." On 3 June, MacArthur's communique optimistically announced that "mopping up was proceeding on Biak."<sup>20</sup> However, at the same time that MacArthur was announcing to the world the imminent successful conclusion of the campaign, the Australian press was relaying a totally different story. Spencer Davis reported in *Australia Newsweek* that "obviously, it would require additional reinforcements to achieve the resounding victory proclaimed ten days ago by General MacArthur."<sup>21</sup>

MacArthur, aware of the discrepancy between the actual tactical situation and his communiques, became increasingly concerned as time went on. On 5 June he told General Krueger (the 6th Army Commander and General Fuller's immediate superior): "I am becoming concerned at the failure to secure the Biak airfields . . . is the advance being pushed with sufficient determination? Our negligible ground losses would seem to indicate a failure to do so." On 14 June,



MacArthur cabled General Krueger: "The situation on Biak is unsatisfactory. The strategic purpose of the operation is being jeopardized by the failure to establish without delay an operating field for aircraft."<sup>22</sup>

During the first two weeks of June 1944, as the tactical situation stagnated, MacArthur continued to press General Krueger for results. General Krueger recalled that he "dispatched several radiograms to the task force commander directing him to speed up the operation. But it was easier to order this than get it done for . . . the troops were faced by great difficulties."<sup>23</sup>

With the tactical situation stalemated, victory having been proclaimed two weeks earlier and the invasion of Saipan scheduled for the next day, MacArthur and Krueger called for their most able field commander to salvage the situation and put out this fire before it consumed their reputations. At 1800 hours on 14 June 1944, General Krueger summoned General Eichelberger to an emergency conference at his headquarters. At this conference General Krueger "explained that after continuous fighting, coupled with extremely unfriendly terrain, intense heat and scarcity of water, the infantry units within the task force were beginning to tire to a critical degree."<sup>24</sup> General Krueger then told Eichelberger to take command at Biak the following morning.

At 0830 hours on 15 June, Eichelberger and a small staff departed for Biak. They arrived at General Fuller's headquarters at 1230 that day.<sup>25</sup> Eichelberger spent the first two and one-half days at the front familiarizing himself with the tactical situation and the fighting capabilities of his own forces. On 16 June he went to the regimental command posts of the 186th and 162nd Infantry Regiments to assess personally the morale and effectiveness of those units. On 17 June, he observed the conduct of the two units under fire.<sup>26</sup> Eichelberger radioed General Krueger: "Today I have been with General Doe and 186 and 162 Infantry. With the possible exception of the first Bn 162 Inf the troops are not nearly as exhausted as I had expected and I believe they can be made to fight with energy."<sup>27</sup>

On 17 June General Krueger, still under pressure from General MacArthur, radioed Eichelberger to "launch your attack . . . promptly and press it home with the utmost vigor."<sup>28</sup> Eichelberger, however, had a plan for defeating the Japanese and was not going to be pressured into prematurely launching his attack because of MacArthur's and Krueger's embarrassment over previous communiques. Therefore, on 17 June Eichelberger sent this succinct message to General Krueger, outlining his plan of attack:

Having arrived here forty-eight hours ago in almost complete ignorance of the situation, I have spent two days at the front. Tomorrow [Sunday], I have called off all fighting and troops will be reorganized. On Monday, I propose to put three battalions in the rear of the Japanese, and on Tuesday I propose to take the other two airfields.<sup>29</sup>

After clearly informing General Krueger of his plan and his pace, Eichelberger took two additional actions on 17 June. First, he ordered a reinforced rifle company to occupy Hill 320, which was the dominating terrain feature in the area north of the three airfields, thus providing an excellent observation point.<sup>30</sup> Second, Eichelberger issued his instructions for the 19 June attack. He would not try to directly seize the airfields nor conduct a frontal attack against the Japanese positions. Instead, he would envelop the enemy by going around the Japanese southern flank and seizing the ridgeline north of Mokmer airfield from the rear.<sup>31</sup> Eichelberger's objectives were to eliminate the Japanese ability to fire on Mokmer airfield and to obtain favorable terrain from which to launch future advances.<sup>32</sup> Eichelberger later credited the Japanese with giving him the solution for cracking their defenses. He had carefully examined all their operations in World War II and believed that the Japanese tactics in Malaya would provide the method of ending the stalemate on Biak. In Malaya, each time the British forces prepared a defensive line, the Japanese enveloped it. Once the British discovered that the Japanese were in their rear, the whole defensive line

collapsed and the British withdrew to establish another. This process was repeated down the entire peninsula. Eichelberger believed that at Biak the "Japanese troops [would], just like occidental troops, take a very dim and unhappy view of enemy forces in their rear."<sup>33</sup>

On 18 June, Eichelberger repeated a lesson he had learned at Buna and rested his troops before the major attack. As the soldiers rested, Eichelberger gave his subordinate commanders time to reorganize their forces and to ensure that "everybody could find out what they were doing."<sup>34</sup> Eichelberger also sent out patrols to reconnoiter the Japanese positions, and by evening on 18 June his troops were, in the words of an eyewitness, "ready to move hard and fast."<sup>35</sup>

On the morning of 19 June, the 41st Division launched a coordinated attack and moved hard and fast to accomplish Eichelberger's objectives. The 3rd Battalion, 163rd Infantry, and two battalions (2nd and 3rd) of the 186th Infantry Regiment "had enveloped the rear of the Japanese in the west caves and could prevent their reinforcement or escape."<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, this attack secured the Mokmer airfield from hostile ground attack.

Even though the attack on 19 June was a complete success, the situation demanded that Eichelberger continue to press his troops forward. He ordered an attack on 20 June to seize the remaining two airfields, Borokoe and Sorido, and to destroy the Japanese who were emplaced in the west caves (by the 162nd Infantry). By 1030 hours on 20 June, Eichelberger had seized the Borokoe and Sorido airfields.<sup>37</sup> The Hurricane Task Force's original mission had been accomplished. Eichelberger continued to press the attack against the Japanese who were neutralized in caves even though the airfields were secured.

On the night of 21-22 June, the Japanese commander, Colonel Kuzume, recognized defeat. He destroyed the regimental colors and all official documents and then ordered all able-bodied soldiers to attempt a breakout. The Japanese tried three times to break through the lines of the 186th Infantry. At

2100 hours, and then at 2400 hours on 21 June, the Japanese attacked and were repulsed. At 0400 hours on 22 June, the Japanese tried for the final time. All three attacks failed.<sup>38</sup> The last Japanese resistance in the caves was finally mopped up on 27 June.

Eichelberger departed Biak at 0900 hours on 28 June. It had taken him only five days to seize the three Japanese airfields and to break the enemy's main line of defense. It is worth noting that he accomplished this at a cost of only 400 Americans killed, compared to the 4700 Japanese killed in action.<sup>39</sup> Eichelberger credited his success "to profanity, flattery, offers of rewards, threats, and lady luck."<sup>40</sup> The tactical situation had been solved quickly, and MacArthur's reputation had not been tarnished. MacArthur could move on to his cherished operations in the Philippines without concern for Biak. After this operation, MacArthur rewarded Eichelberger with the command of the new Eighth Army.

#### **MacARTHUR'S THIRD PROBLEM: MANILA**

MacArthur successfully returned to the Philippines on 20 October 1944 when the Sixth United States Army landed on the island of Leyte. On 9 January 1945, MacArthur landed the same Sixth Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Walter Krueger, at Lingayen Gulf on the main island of Luzon. In 12 months, MacArthur had moved 2000 miles closer to Japan and had commenced the liberation of the Philippines. With the exception of Biak, all these operations had proceeded like clockwork.

The objective of the Sixth Army forces that landed at Lingayen Gulf was the City of Manila, 120 miles to the south. The assault troops at Lingayen Gulf consisted of the I and XIV Corps and the 40th, 37th, 6th, and 43rd Divisions.<sup>41</sup> General Krueger and his forces encountered no opposition on the beaches and little in the initial advance; however, terrain and logistical problems did slow the pace.<sup>42</sup> On 12 January 1945, only three days after Sixth Army had landed on Luzon, General MacArthur summoned

General Krueger to his headquarters to complain of the slow progress. MacArthur believed that since the Sixth Army casualties were light, they had encountered little resistance and could pick up the tempo of their attack. MacArthur was unimpressed with Krueger's arguments for additional troops with which to conduct the dash for Manila.<sup>43</sup>

MacArthur, who felt that the Japanese would not defend Manila, had correctly assessed the intentions of the Japanese commander on Luzon, General Tomoyuki Yamashita. Yamashita, with 275,000 Japanese troops on Luzon, realized that he could not possibly hope to defend the entire island. He knew that he could not confront the overwhelming forces MacArthur could bring to bear against him in the important region of the Central Plains and Manila Bay.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, he planned a fighting withdrawal into the mountainous strongholds in northern Luzon, which would tie up large amounts of allied shipping, troops, and aircraft. He hoped that this defense would delay the inevitable invasion of the Japanese homeland.<sup>45</sup> General Yamashita specifically ordered Lieutenant General Shizuo Yokoyama, the Eighth Division Commander, not to defend Manila but rather to evacuate the city.<sup>46</sup> However, due to bureaucratic disagreements between the Japanese army and navy, Vice Admiral Denshichi Okochi, the naval commander in Manila, decided to conduct a full-scale defense of the city against Yamashita's wishes.<sup>47</sup> Admiral Okochi's decision later caused a great deal of friction between General MacArthur and General Krueger.

By mid-January 1945, as the Sixth Army moved on Manila at a snail's pace, MacArthur grew more and more obsessed with the capture of the city. Manila Bay was of vital importance, but MacArthur's reasons were more than simply logistical and strategic.<sup>48</sup> It was almost as if his personal military reputation depended on liberating the city as quickly as possible. Therefore, throughout the month of January, the slow progress of the Sixth Army was a great irritant to General MacArthur. On 23

January, a newspaper correspondent, Lee Van Atta, informed Eichelberger that "General MacArthur had been laying down the law to Krueger about the slow advance at Lingayen and that he had given him an ultimatum to be in Manila by the 5th of February."<sup>49</sup> On 30 January 1945, General MacArthur personally went to the front to investigate the reason for the Sixth Army's slow advance. According to the official Army historian for this campaign, MacArthur found the pace of the advance "much too leisurely."<sup>50</sup> MacArthur then informed General Krueger that the 37th Division had demonstrated "a noticeable lack of drive and aggressive initiative."<sup>51</sup> General MacArthur in frustration said that the Sixth Army was "mentally incapable but if given tremendous forces they [were] able to advance ponderously and slowly to victory."<sup>52</sup>

This standard of performance was unacceptable to MacArthur and, as had become the routine when his reputation was at stake, he called on Eichelberger. To speed up the pace of operations on Luzon, MacArthur directed Eichelberger to conduct an amphibious landing on 31 January at Nasugbu, 45 miles southwest of Manila. The assault troops for this operation were the 11th Airborne Division, commanded by Major General Joseph Swing, and the 511th Parachute Regimental Combat Team.<sup>53</sup> MacArthur intended the Nasugbu landing to be a "reconnaissance in force to test the enemy defenses in southern Luzon."<sup>54</sup> Eichelberger was directed to land only one regimental combat team (188th Glider Regiment) initially. However, he was given the discretion to land the 187th Glider Regiment and to push north toward Manila if he met no opposition. In addition, Eichelberger had the authority to airdrop the 511th Parachute Regiment to exploit success, if the situation warranted it.<sup>55</sup> General MacArthur hoped that this operation would divert Japanese forces from north of Manila and prohibit them from concentrating all their defenses against the Sixth Army.<sup>56</sup>

At 0815 hours on 13 January 1945, Eichelberger landed his first assault force (the 188th Regimental Combat Team) at Nasugbu

Beach. This regiment encountered light resistance from the Japanese and by 0945 had seized the town of Nasugbu and the Nasugbu airport.<sup>57</sup> At 1030 hours Eichelberger, aboard the USS *Spencer*, made the decision to exploit the initial success of the 188th Regimental Combat Team. He ordered General Swing to land the rest of the 11th Airborne Division and to push on as rapidly as possible toward Manila. By noon the rest of the division had landed and was driving inland.<sup>58</sup>

Eichelberger went ashore at 1300 hours and immediately proceeded to the front to confer with General Swing.<sup>59</sup> Eichelberger, who was not without personal ambition, had as his objective to drive rapidly toward the capture of Manila.<sup>60</sup> Eichelberger later reflected that this operation was successful because "speed was emphasized and contact once gained was maintained until the enemy was either dispersed or annihilated." Eichelberger's tactics, which demanded rapid penetration by his infantry in order to avoid the stalemate that would ensue if the Japanese had time to establish their defenses, had been developed at Buna and Biak, where he had found that the infantry had a tendency to go slow and wait for the artillery to defeat the enemy.<sup>61</sup>

Eichelberger's emphasis on speed was rewarded when lead elements of the 188th Regiment seized the important Palico River bridge, eight miles inland, at 1430. The 11th Airborne Division's after-action report stated that "the Palico River Bridge had been prepared for demolition, but the Japanese were surprised by the rapid advance of our troops, and were caught on the far side of the bridge. Our fire prevented them from reaching the bridge and they withdrew toward Tagaytay Ridge."<sup>62</sup> This bridge was important because it allowed Eichelberger's forces to use the Nasugbu-Tagaytay road, which was an all-weather highway, and considerably shortened their supply line.<sup>63</sup>

After the bridge was seized, Eichelberger ordered General Swing to continue the advance through the night because he believed that the "enemy troops were confused and retreating," and a halt at dark would have permitted them to reorganize.<sup>64</sup> At midnight,

the 187th Regiment passed through the 188th and continued the advance toward Manila. The 11th Airborne Division pushed on throughout the night. The following morning Eichelberger went to the front to inspect and exhort his men and soon found himself moving with the lead company in the advance.<sup>65</sup> His emphasis on speed had paid great dividends in his first 28 hours ashore. The 11th Airborne Division not only had established a port and an airfield in this time, but also had penetrated the main line of Japanese resistance and had advanced 19 miles.<sup>66</sup> To exploit this success, Eichelberger alerted the 511th Parachute Regiment to be prepared for an airborne drop in the vicinity of Tagaytay Ridge.<sup>67</sup>

By 2 February 1945, the 11th Airborne Division had fought its way through two Japanese defensive positions and by dusk had reached the third and most powerful Japanese position in the vicinity of Tagaytay Ridge.<sup>68</sup> Tagaytay Ridge was the most important military position held by the Japanese in southern Luzon. It was a formidable obstacle because its 2400-foot height dominated all the terrain in the region. Also, there was a two-lane concrete highway which led from Tagaytay Ridge straight down (30 miles) into Manila.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, as General Eichelberger and General Swing personally moved forward with the lead elements on 2 February, Eichelberger made the decision to envelop the Japanese positions on Tagaytay Ridge by air-dropping the 511th Parachute Regiment behind the Japanese. The Japanese would then be in a crossfire between the US elements.<sup>70</sup>

At 0730 on 3 February 1945, the 188th Regimental Combat Team assaulted the highest hill on Tagaytay Ridge, known as Shorty Hill. At 0815 the 511th Parachute Regiment jumped behind the Japanese position on Tagaytay Ridge.<sup>71</sup> Eichelberger was again under fire as he observed the critical assault from two directions, which finally reduced the Japanese positions on Tagaytay Ridge. By 1300 hours the Japanese positions had been destroyed and the 511th Parachute Regiment had linked up with the 188th Regiment. As soon as Tagaytay Ridge

was secure, patrols were sent down the highway toward Manila.<sup>72</sup>

In accordance with General Eichelberger's tactical emphasis on speed, General Swing loaded the 511th Parachute Regiment on trucks on the night of 3-4 February and ordered them to proceed "toward Manila until resistance was encountered."<sup>73</sup> The rest of the division followed on foot.<sup>74</sup> The Eighth Army after-action report describes the success of this tactic: "So rapid was our advance that the enemy had neither the time nor the presence of mind to detonate mines they had previously prepared along the route of march. Consequently, demolished bridges did not slow our advance until we reached [the town of] Imus."<sup>75</sup>

At 1000 hours on 4 February 1945, Eichelberger had reached Imus and was moving with the forwardmost elements of the 511th Parachute Regiment. The main highway bridge at Imus had been destroyed by the Japanese, and an alternate crossing bridge, 500 yards to the west, was heavily defended. However, the 511th with Eichelberger leading soon found a small crossing site and destroyed the Japanese positions from the rear.<sup>76</sup> Eichelberger's emphasis on speed in this action almost cost him his life, as he recorded in his diary: "[I] moved forward to the south end of the bridge and was pinned down by sniper fire which could not be located."<sup>77</sup>

After this action the 511th Parachute Regiment pushed on toward Manila. Eichelberger again positioned himself at the most dangerous and crucial point of the operation, as evidenced by the following diary entry: "I continued on down the road keeping abreast of the leading elements until [we] reached Las Pinas."<sup>78</sup> The speed of this attack continued to surprise the Japanese. The 11th Airborne after-action report stated that "once again the Japanese were found asleep, and the Las Pinas bridge was secured before the demolitions were set off."<sup>79</sup> The 511th had reached the southern suburbs of Manila and continued their drive until 2130 hours, when they were halted by well-prepared Japanese positions at the Paranque bridge. By 4 February the 11th Airborne had traveled 45 miles and had reached Manila.<sup>80</sup>

During this operation Eichelberger seemed to be everywhere at once. After the 511th Parachute Regiment crossed the Las Pinas bridge, Eichelberger found that the truck shuttling system was not functioning properly; therefore, he "returned to Tagaytay Ridge to do what [he] could about speeding up this advance."<sup>81</sup> The next morning Eichelberger again displayed great personal courage and moved with the advance elements of the 511th Parachute Regiment across the Paranque bridge. However, this was the end of the rapid movement by the Eighth Army. The Americans had reached the Genko-Line which had been designed to protect Manila from an attack from the south.<sup>82</sup> The Genko-Line was held by the Japanese 3rd Naval Battalion. Robert Ross Smith, the US Army official historian for this campaign, described the 3rd Naval Battalion positions as "the strongest in the Manila area, having the virtue of being long established. Reinforced concrete pillboxes abounded at street intersections in the suburban area south of the city limits, many of them covered with dirt long enough to have natural camouflage."<sup>83</sup> Against these positions, the 11th Airborne was able to move only 2000 yards in two days.<sup>84</sup>

On 7 February 1945, Eichelberger received word from MacArthur that the 11th Airborne would soon come under the Sixth Army control. Eichelberger departed Luzon before Manila was captured, on 9 February 1945, in order to prepare for the southern Philippines campaign.<sup>85</sup>

MacArthur had two reasons for ordering Eichelberger to conduct the Nasugbu landing, and Eichelberger had successfully accomplished both of them. The official objective was "to disrupt the Japanese lines of communication [and] create a diversion to support the main landing at Lingayen [by Sixth Army]."<sup>86</sup> However, Eichelberger understood that MacArthur had another motive: "I realize that placing me with a small force south of Manila was the MacArthur way of stirring up Krueger into action and speed. He succeeded when the newspapermen reported that troops that had been able to go only yards a day had begun to

go miles after hearing that I was en route.”<sup>87</sup> Eichelberger’s estimate of the Sixth Army was verified by an eyewitness; Major General William C. Dunkel wrote Eichelberger: “When you were pushing on Manila so rapidly, I visited Sixth Army Headquarters and found them greatly agitated over the fact that you would be in Manila before they were, and I believe to this day that we could have saved more of Manila if they had given you the means to come in by way of Nasugbu.”<sup>88</sup> The result of MacArthur’s prodding of General Krueger, Eighth Army’s siphoning of Japanese troops from the north of Manila, and General Krueger’s jealousy of Eichelberger was that by 4 February 1945 the Sixth Army had two divisions, the 1st Cavalry Division and the 37th Division, on the outskirts of Manila.<sup>89</sup>

In 104 hours, Eichelberger had pushed his troops 45 miles from Nasugbu to Manila. He had once again salvaged the tactical situation for MacArthur.

In the 41 years that have elapsed since World War II, the difficulties encountered by MacArthur in the Southwest Pacific have been glossed over and in some cases all but forgotten. His victories have been made to seem automatic. This is terribly unfair to the soldiers who fought for MacArthur. He had problems in the Southwest Pacific and his victories were far from automatic. In three cases, Buna, Biak, and Manila, his reputation as a brilliant strategist was almost tarnished. In each case he called on Lieutenant General Robert Eichelberger to salvage the situation. Eichelberger never failed him. A combination of innovative tactics, personal courage, and commonsense leadership made Eichelberger an effective, trusted field commander.

#### NOTES

1. Eichelberger was 6-1 and weighed 190 pounds. R. Eichelberger to E. Eichelberger, 13 January 1944 and 3 April 1945. Contained in the Eichelberger Papers, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

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3. Robert Eichelberger and Milton MacKaye, *Our Jungle Road To Tokyo* (Washington: Zenger, 1949), pp. 21-23. The division was the 32nd Infantry.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
5. Luvaas, p. 58; D. Edwards to R. Eichelberger, 11 January 1943; Eichelberger Papers.
6. Eichelberger and MacKaye, p. 101.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Eichelberger and MacKaye, p. 138; Harold Riegelman, *Caves of Biak: An American Officer’s Experience in the Southwest Pacific* (New York: Dial, 1955), p. 137.
9. D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur, Vol. II, 1941-1945* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1975), p. 453.
10. George Kenney, *General Kenney Reports: A Personal History of the Pacific War* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearle, 1949), p. 289; James, p. 459; Luvaas, p. 125.
11. R. G. 407-201-2: B. 3028, “G-2 Summary of the Biak Operation: 27 May-29 June 1944,” p. 2, Federal Research Center, Suitland, Md., hereinafter cited as “G-2 Summary of Biak.”
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13. Spencer Davis, “Slaughter on Biak,” *Australia Newsweek*, 12 June 1944; Eichelberger Papers.
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17. *Ibid.*, p. 5; Davis; Eichelberger Papers.
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19. Smith, *Approach*, p. 341.
20. James, p. 459.
21. Davis; Eichelberger Papers.
22. James, pp. 459-60.
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24. Allied Forces, Southwest Pacific Area, “I Corps History of the Biak Operation,” p. 3; Eichelberger Diary, 14 June 1944, Eichelberger Papers.
25. Eichelberger Diary, 15 June 1944; Eichelberger Papers.
26. *Ibid.*, 16-17 June 1944.
27. R. Eichelberger to W. Krueger, 16 June 1944; Eichelberger Papers.
28. W. Krueger to R. Eichelberger, 17 June 1944; Eichelberger Papers.
29. Eichelberger and MacKaye, p. 146.
30. Allied Forces, “History of the Biak Operation,” pp. 5-6; Eichelberger Papers.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Smith, *Approach*, pp. 368-69.
33. Eichelberger and MacKaye, p. 146.
34. R. Eichelberger to E. Eichelberger, 19 June 1944, Eichelberger Papers.
35. Riegelman, p. 142.
36. Smith, *Approach*, p. 372.
37. Eichelberger Diary, 19 June 1944; Allied Forces, “History of the Biak Operation,” p. 8; Eichelberger Papers.
38. R. G. 407: 341-INF(186)-0.1 B.10641, pp. 25-26, Federal Records Center, Suitland, Md.; Allied Forces, “History of the Biak Operation,” p. 12; Eichelberger Papers.
39. James, p. 460.
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41. Krueger, p. 218.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
43. *Ibid.* pp. 227-28.
44. Robert Ross Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines* (Washington: Dept. of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1963), p. 94.

45. James, p. 625.
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57. "Operation Shoestring," p. 1.
58. *Ibid.*; Eichelberger and MacKaye, p. 190.
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60. "Report of C.G. Nasugbu and Bataan," foreword; Eichelberger Papers.
61. *Ibid.*; R. Eichelberger to E. Eichelberger, 20 June 1944, Luvaas, p. 133.
62. "Operation Shoestring," p. 1.
63. "Report of C.G. Nasugbu and Bataan," pp. 6, 16; Eichelberger Papers.
64. Eichelberger and MacKaye, p. 190.
65. R. Eichelberger to E. Eichelberger, 2 February 1945, Luvaas, p. 208; "Operation Shoestring," p. 2.
66. "Operation Shoestring," p. 2.
67. "Report of the C.G. Nasugbu and Bataan," p. 16; Eichelberger Papers.
68. *Ibid.*; "Operation Shoestring," p. 2.
69. Eichelberger and MacKaye, p. 194; "C.G. Report on Nasugbu and Bataan," p. 6; Eichelberger Papers.
70. "Operation Shoestring," p. 2.
71. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
72. Edward M. Flanagan, *The Angels: A History of the 11th Airborne Division, 1943-1946* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1948), p. 76; Eichelberger Diary, 3 February 1945, Eichelberger Papers.
73. "Operation Shoestring," p. 3.
74. *Ibid.*
75. "Report of the C.G. Nasugbu and Bataan," p. 22, Eichelberger Papers.
76. *Ibid.*; Eichelberger Diary, 4 February 1945, Eichelberger Papers.
77. Eichelberger Diary, 4 February 1945, Eichelberger Papers.
78. *Ibid.*
79. "Operation Shoestring," p. 4.
80. *Ibid.*; "C.G. Report Nasugbu and Bataan," p. 22; Eichelberger Papers.
81. Eichelberger Diary, 4 February 1945, Eichelberger Papers.
82. "Operation Shoestring," pp. 4-5; "C.G. Report Nasugbu and Bataan," p. 24; Eichelberger Papers.
83. Smith, *Triumph*, p. 265.
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89. James, pp. 632-33.



# CHINA ON ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT

by

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The leaders of the People's Republic of China have often referred to their position on arms control and disarmament as consistent and principled.<sup>1</sup> Yet it is clear that since 1949 Beijing's arms control policies have been dynamic, reflecting and supporting changing ideological, military, economic, and foreign policy objectives. Although shifts in China's arms control posture have been subtle and incremental, it is possible to identify distinct policy lines associated with particular periods of time during the PRC's brief history. It is useful to trace the evolution of China's attitude toward arms control and disarmament and to compare major policy themes in order to clarify the relationship between the PRC's national objectives and its specific stands on arms control. A thorough understanding of this relationship is important in suggesting how China, the world's third most important nuclear power, will assess and approach global arms control issues in the future.

## SINO-SOVIET SOLIDARITY: 1949-1960

From the establishment of the PRC in 1949 until 1960, China generally followed the lead of the Soviet Union in formulating its arms control and disarmament policy. This is attributable to two factors: first, there was a considerable commonality of interests between the two countries during this period, and second, the PRC was willing to show solidarity with the Soviet Union in return for

Moscow's support against China's "imperialist," nuclear-armed adversary, the United States.

The Chinese leadership seemed to disparage the value of nuclear weapons during the first years of the PRC. As early as 1946, Mao Zedong announced:

The birth of the atom bomb was the beginning of the end of the American imperialists. For they began to rely on the bomb and not on the people . . . In the end the bomb will not annihilate the people. The people will annihilate the bomb.<sup>2</sup>

Although such confidence reflected the Marxist-Leninist tenet that men, and not weapons, play the decisive role in war, Mao had few weapons at his disposal and was probably making a virtue out of necessity. In fact, in spite of rhetoric which denigrated nuclear weapons as "paper tigers," both the Soviet Union and the PRC did increase their respect for the implications of nuclear warfare during the 1950s, and Moscow's singular emphasis on total nuclear disarmament was in consonance with this growing awareness of the communist world's strategic vulnerability. The United States held an overwhelming lead in strategic weapons over the Soviet Union, and unrealistic proposals for total disarmament provided Moscow with an opportunity to close the nuclear arms gap while still portraying itself as responsive to calls from the world community for decisive action in the arms control and disarmament



arena. At the same time, emphasis on nuclear disarmament supported the PRC in another important respect since it avoided the issue of Beijing's primary asset—its massive, if primitive, conventional army.

By the late 1950s, the Soviet Union began to embark on a very different approach, advocating nuclear arms control instead of disarmament. In 1956, the Soviets proposed a ban on thermonuclear testing, a nuclear-free zone in Germany, and mutual reductions in the defense expenditures of the United States and the Soviet Union.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, China decided to develop its own nuclear weapons and sought technical assistance from the Soviets. Khrushchev's favorable response led to the signing of a bilateral Sino-Soviet agreement in October 1957.<sup>4</sup> Encouraged by this and the perception that *Sputnik* had dramatically shifted the strategic balance of power from Washington to Moscow, Beijing was willing to accommodate its socialist patron's changing arms control line. By 1959, Zhou Enlai paralleled the Soviet line by advocating "the establishment of an area free of atomic weapons, an area of peace, throughout the whole of East Asia and the Pacific Region."<sup>5</sup>

#### BEIJING'S INDEPENDENT LINE: 1960-1964

Sino-Soviet differences on a broad range of issues started to become evident to the outside world by 1960, and by 1964 an independent policy on arms control and disarmament emerged from Beijing. In January 1960 the head of China's nuclear weapons program, Nie Rongzhen, reported to his senior leaders that USSR technical support had become problematic.<sup>6</sup> The Soviets removed their technical advisors from China in October 1960, and the PRC was left to fend for itself. Feeling itself strategically isolated and vulnerable, China rapidly pursued the development of atomic weapons. The PRC strongly opposed the partial test ban treaty offered by the United States and Great Britain, denouncing it as "nuclear blackmail," and supported the Soviet Union's initial rejection of the proposal.<sup>7</sup>

When the Soviets reversed their position and signed the treaty on 5 August 1963, China caustically called the ban an "extremely dangerous fraud."<sup>8</sup> Similarly, it registered its opposition during this period to the Soviet Union's call for general and complete disarmament.<sup>9</sup> These positions were consistent with the PRC's ideological and military objectives. Ideologically, the Chinese were not prepared to renounce force in their struggle with imperialism; supporting general and complete disarmament would indicate such a renunciation. More important, the PRC was unwilling to see itself permanently denied strategic parity with the superpowers, which seemed implicit in acquiescence to the partial test ban treaty. In fact, without any significant allies, China actually argued for nuclear proliferation, claiming in August 1963:

Did the danger of nuclear war become greater or less when the number of nuclear weapons increased from one to two? We say it becomes less, not greater. Whether or not nuclear weapons help peace depends on who possesses them. It is detrimental to peace if they are in the hands of imperialist countries; it helps peace if they are in the hands of socialist countries. It must not be said indiscriminately that the danger of nuclear war increases along with the increase in the number of nuclear powers.<sup>10</sup>

However, China did feel compelled to rationalize its rejection of American and Soviet arms control and disarmament proposals, which had begun to enlist some global support. On 31 July 1963, Beijing offered its own three-point proposal for disarmament, calling for:

- The total prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons as well as research, testing, and the means of production.
- The elimination of overseas military bases, the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in Asia and the Pacific, a ban on the import or export of nuclear arms, and a total ban of nuclear tests.
- A conference of all of the heads of states of the world to discuss a comprehensive

test ban and the elimination of nuclear weapons.<sup>11</sup>

Beijing's pursuit of its own military and foreign policy objectives was evident in this lofty plan. The first point was designed to break the superpowers' nuclear duopoly, the second to establish China's military dominance in Asia by removing the American nuclear and conventional threat, and the third to rally the Third World to its cause by insisting on democratizing the arms control and disarmament process.

#### CHINA AS A NUCLEAR POWER: 1964-1971

On 15 October 1964 the PRC achieved its first nuclear explosion, an event that heralded a new approach in Beijing toward arms control and disarmament. Immediately after its initial atomic test, China announced a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons and emphasized the defensive nature of its nuclear strategy, themes which have remained unchanged since.<sup>12</sup> The no-first-use doctrine was and remains prudent given China's nuclear inferiority vis-a-vis the superpowers. China's doctrine parallels that of the Soviet Union in the 1950s when Moscow consistently renounced the first use of nuclear weapons in the face of overwhelming American superiority.<sup>13</sup> With only a miniscule arsenal at its disposal, China gained the moral high ground while sacrificing nothing militarily through its abandonment of a first-strike option. Nevertheless, the PRC was genuinely concerned about alarming both the superpowers and its Asian neighbors with its aggressive nuclear program and found it useful to stress its defensive strategy. By 1966 militant calls for revolution emanating from Beijing were tempered with statements expressing the "sincere hope" that nuclear war could be avoided and the conviction that it could be if the "peace-loving" countries of the world showed resolve.<sup>14</sup>

Still, the PRC remained ambivalent toward nuclear weapons. Beijing feared that an excessively timid posture could breed defeatism within the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and encourage the superpowers

at the very time when tensions were increasing along the Sino-Soviet frontier and in Vietnam. The Chinese assigned their nuclear forces a mission of "minimum deterrence" and continued to advocate Mao's "people's war" in which the human factor would triumph over the material factor.<sup>15</sup>

During the middle and late 1960s, China, as the self-proclaimed champion of the Third World, continued efforts to justify its opposition to the 1963 Limited Test Ban Treaty, the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the 1971 Sea-Bed Treaty, all of which had gained significant, if qualified, support within the world community. First, Beijing argued ideologically that its nuclear weapons program was a "great encouragement" to the revolutionary masses.<sup>16</sup> Second, it stressed that the treaties of this period were meaningless agreements sponsored by the superpowers in order to deceive the people of the world and guarantee the Soviet-American nuclear duopoly. Third, Chinese leaders proclaimed, somewhat defensively, that China had been forced to develop nuclear weapons because the United States would not adopt a no-first-use policy.<sup>17</sup>

However, Beijing prudently ensured that its vociferous opposition to superpower arms control policies did not lead to reckless provocation. For instance, despite its opposition to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, China did not actively encourage proliferation. Only one year after China's first nuclear explosion, PRC Foreign Minister

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Chen Yi said that while China would lend assistance to other countries in their peaceful pursuit of atomic energy, the entire question of helping others to develop atomic weapons was "not realistic."<sup>18</sup> However, although opposition to the arms control treaties of this period furthered the PRC's national objectives, undoubtedly Beijing's hostility was intensified by its lack of representation in the organization which had sponsored and facilitated these agreements, the United Nations.

#### INTEGRATION INTO THE WORLD COMMUNITY: 1971-1980

On 15 November 1971, China was admitted to the United Nations, and its line on arms control and disarmament changed over the next decade as the PRC adjusted to its newly found prestige and respectability within the international order. Qiao Guanhua, the PRC's representative to the United Nations, told the General Assembly in late 1971 that the superpowers' continued buildup of nuclear arms was threatening world peace. Qiao advocated total nuclear disarmament, and suggested that as a first step in attaining this goal, the nuclear powers should adopt a no-first-use policy. He also posited that the establishment of nuclear-free zones, a concept which was gaining considerable Third World support, should be predicated on the no-first-use policy of the nuclear powers as well as the elimination of all overseas nuclear forces and bases.<sup>19</sup> Beijing still found itself in a position of nuclear inferiority and militarily could not subscribe to anything less than total nuclear disarmament. Meanwhile, it continued to ignore the call for general and complete disarmament, which was true to its Marxist-Leninist ideology and national defense requirements.

Nevertheless, small shifts in the PRC's approach to arms control could be found in Qiao's emphasis on nuclear-free zones, clearly an effort to capture Third World support. Even more interesting was the retreat from its former position demanding an elimination of all overseas bases; now it

was only necessary to remove nuclear weapons based abroad to achieve nuclear-free zones. The PRC, which by 1971 viewed the Soviet Union as the primary threat to itself and to world peace, was possibly giving tacit support to an American presence in Asia and the Pacific by compromising on its earlier stand on overseas military bases.

Several more obvious changes to China's arms control and disarmament policy occurred in the 1970s. First, in 1974 Beijing ratified Protocol II of the Treaty For the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco). This was the first arms control agreement accepted by the PRC since its ratification in the early 1950s of the 1925 Geneva protocol on chemical and bacteriological weapons.<sup>20</sup> The prerequisites for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone that China had announced in 1971 had not been met, yet it acceded to the treaty. The compromise reflected its concern with being considered an outcast of the world community and its willingness to respond to Third World pressure in order to legitimize its claim to leadership.<sup>21</sup>

A second major shift in China's arms control line became evident in 1978 when it agreed to participate in the Special Session at the UN General Assembly on Disarmament, promoted by the nonaligned bloc. Beijing in the early 1970s had announced that it "would never betray the non-nuclear nations by joining nuclear disarmament negotiations at which the big nuclear powers presided,"<sup>22</sup> and China had belittled arms control efforts in the absence of positive superpower initiatives. Although the PRC could correctly argue that the special session on disarmament was not a conference manipulated by the "big nuclear powers," it is clear that Beijing was willing to modify its position to keep its Third World credentials in order. In addition, its qualified support for the United Nations' Disarmament Commission, established in 1979, signaled China's growing interest in involving itself in international arms control dialogues.

Finally, the PRC departed from its narrow focus on nuclear armaments and

adopted the position that the danger of war could only be eliminated if both conventional and nuclear weapons were reduced simultaneously. It called on the superpowers to make massive reductions in their force structures as a step preliminary to the convening of meaningful global arms reduction talks.<sup>23</sup> The newly placed emphasis on both conventional and nuclear arms reductions reflected China's concern with the massive Soviet buildup of conventional and tactical nuclear forces along the Sino-Soviet frontier during the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. (Recent discussions with the PLA on the employment of tactical nuclear weapons would indicate the Chinese High Command is at least contemplating the possibility of nuclear war-fighting beneath the strategic threshold.<sup>24</sup> In other words, Beijing, which shares a long border with the Soviet Union, may now be more sensitive to its military vulnerability over a wide spectrum of conventional and nuclear force thresholds and feel that strategic arms control of itself does not enhance the security of the nation.)

Despite signs of growing flexibility and moderation on certain issues, the PRC still remained opposed to any arms control proposals that it found clearly detrimental to its security, even when such opposition ran counter to Third World opinion. As Beijing became increasingly preoccupied with the containment of Moscow, it excoriated Soviet disarmament proposals at the United Nations as "hollow talk."<sup>25</sup> Moreover, it generally denounced both SALT I and II as "sham arms control."<sup>26</sup> China's major grievance with SALT was that it did not effectively curtail superpower efforts to achieve nuclear superiority. The overwhelming American and Soviet quantitative lead over the PRC in nuclear weapons made SALT quotas of little value to Beijing. Furthermore, SALT did not convincingly restrain the superpowers from making qualitative improvements to their nuclear forces. China, already lagging some 20 years behind the United States and Soviet Union in its strategic force technology, could not afford militarily to allow the superpowers to deploy new, more sophisticated weapon systems that would reduce the credibility of

the PRC's nuclear deterrent.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, the commitment of excessive resources into strategic weapon research and development is at odds with Beijing's economic modernization goals. Viewed in this light, SALT was and remains inimical to the PRC's national interests. China's desire to build an anti-Soviet united front also found expression in its opposition to SALT II in the late 1970s. The adverse tide of Soviet military ascendancy was seen as being furthered by SALT II, and the Chinese repeatedly expressed their concerns to Washington and Western Europe.<sup>28</sup>

#### COMPETITION WITH THE SUPERPOWERS: THE 1980s

During the 1980s, China has continued to alter its arms control and disarmament policies as it redefines its national objectives. The PRC has begun to articulate more precise arms control positions consonant with its military interests. In addition, it seems more willing to accommodate prevailing Second and Third World attitudes toward arms control and disarmament. The PRC's more specific approach was evident in its proposal for disarmament delivered to the UN General Assembly in June 1982. While predictably calling on the superpowers to take the lead in world arms control and disarmament by reducing their conventional and nuclear arsenals, the PRC also suggested that "disarmament measures should be carried out without prejudice or threat to the independence, sovereignty and security of any state."<sup>29</sup> The Chinese were evidently concerned that the United States, in its efforts to strike an arms accord at Geneva, might agree to Soviet redeployment of its SS-20 theater nuclear weapons from Europe to Asia. While remaining unimpressed by superpower arms control efforts in general, China felt directly the potential threat to its security posed by the SS-20s and amended its arms control policy accordingly.<sup>30</sup>

Beijing also offered a quantifiable, if still vague, proposal, calling on the superpowers to cease all nuclear testing and weapon development, and to reduce their

existing arsenals by 50 percent.<sup>31</sup> By advancing a more specific position, China indicated a greater desire to become a participant in the global arms control process, if only by attempting to convince others that its approach is a pragmatic one. Nevertheless, its arms control posture remains supportive of its goal to enhance its military security. China belatedly signed the Outer Space Treaty in 1983 at the very time when it appeared the Soviet Union and United States were on the verge of embarking on an arms race in space. As stated earlier, the PRC obviously seeks to discourage the superpowers from attaining the capacity to threaten its second-strike force and viewed the treaty as being in its best interests. Beijing, cognizant of its strategic weakness, continues to call for a no-first-use pledge from the nuclear powers. It also makes every effort to point out that its own nuclear weapon program remains defensive and is merely a response to the superpowers' own arms race. The Foreign Minister, Wu Xueqian, stated in September 1985 that "the few nuclear weapons China has and the limited number of nuclear tests it has conducted are solely for the purpose of self-defense."<sup>32</sup> The PRC senses the need to rationalize its strategic arms program to the world community, but it also seeks to preempt any efforts in Washington and Moscow to brand Beijing's actions as destabilizing.

China has become more adroit in recent years in gaining propaganda points and enhancing its international image by remaining sensitive to Second and Third World attitudes toward arms control and disarmament. The PRC, which stresses the direct relationship between nuclear and conventional armaments, promoted its recent elimination of one million soldiers from the ranks of the PLA as a major contribution to world peace.<sup>33</sup> The dramatic manpower cut-back, which had been justified domestically primarily on the grounds of increasing the PLA's efficiency, was effectively used by Beijing in world forums as a sign of the PRC's sincerity regarding arms control. Another indicator of China's increasing attention to world opinion has been the

changing tone of its commentaries on American-Soviet arms control talks. As previously mentioned, throughout the 1970s China viewed SALT with contempt. By 1985, however, although China was decidedly pessimistic over the prospects of START,<sup>34</sup> it nevertheless noted that the resumption of the American-Soviet dialogue in Geneva conformed to the "world's wish for disarmament and peace."<sup>35</sup> Beijing's decision not to reject categorically the Geneva process indicates the importance it places on not being viewed as obstructing this wish.

China has also displayed deftness in ensuring that its arms control policies do not impinge upon its economic objectives. The PRC has aggressively pursued an atomic energy program since the late 1970s as part of its modernization program. Its unwillingness to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty has presented obstacles to its acquisition of technology from the West. It has responded by joining the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1983, stating that it would adopt IAEA safeguards for its export of nuclear material and equipment, and offering assurances that its imports of nuclear fuels and equipment would be strictly for peaceful purposes.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, Chinese leaders have gone out of their way to assuage American fears in particular that it does not promote proliferation.<sup>37</sup> While China as a matter of principle remains opposed to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, economic as well as security interests drive China to honor the spirit of the treaty.

Yet China clearly seeks to counter the American-Soviet nuclear arms race with more than words. The PRC currently has approximately 116 strategic missiles<sup>38</sup> and the US Defense Intelligence Agency estimates that China is currently producing around 40 missiles per year.<sup>39</sup> The Chinese High Command has proclaimed that it has achieved a credible second-strike force.<sup>40</sup> In addition, the Chinese navy has initiated a ballistic missile submarine construction program.<sup>41</sup> PLA leaders have emphasized that nuclear weapons are vital to the security of the homeland and that China will continue to add to its strategic arsenal.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the

PRC entertains great-power aspirations and views strategic nuclear forces as a prerequisite to superpower status.<sup>43</sup> While it would be premature to argue that there is at present a role for China in US-Soviet arms control negotiations, it is certain that the PRC's strategic nuclear forces will increasingly influence the arms control and disarmament policies of Washington and Moscow.<sup>44</sup>

### CONCLUSION

The issues raised in this article deserve more scrutiny if the United States is correctly to anticipate Beijing's future approach toward arms control and disarmament; however, some tentative conclusions can be offered. First, the factors that have shaped and will continue to shape China's arms control policies do not differ markedly from those that influence the superpowers' policies. Although Beijing calls its policies principled and unchanging, it is the imperatives of China's national objectives which determine specific attitudes toward arms control and disarmament. As these national objectives undergo change, the substance, if not necessarily the form, of Beijing's policies will likewise change. Second, the PRC's definition of the strategic threat and the PRC's capabilities against the superpowers will affect China's policies. The Chinese are driven by a desire to achieve a credible second-strike capability. Any superpower initiatives which threaten this objective, such as the Strategic Defense Initiative, or arms control proposals which do not enhance this objective, such as the emphasis that SALT and START have placed on quantitative as opposed to qualitative limitations, will meet with PRC opposition. Furthermore, given the nature of the Soviet threat, the PRC's position that nuclear and conventional arms control are related issues will continue as long as China is deficient in both areas. This may complicate arms control negotiations, but perhaps it is advantageous to the West, given NATO's own conventional inferiority to the USSR.

Finally, China will continue to attempt to improve its status within the global

community by portraying itself both as the underdog champion of the Third World and as a responsible major power in the international order. This will make Beijing susceptible to world pressure to participate in arms control and disarmament dialogues or to accept agreements that are contrary to its "principled stands"; at the same time, Beijing can be expected to refine its own positioning regarding arms controls, offering quantifiable programs in its efforts to wrest the initiative from Washington and Moscow in the struggle for international support.

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# VIEW FROM THE FOURTH ESTATE

## PLAYING TO WIN

Samuel P. Huntington

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*In each issue, Parameters features "View from the Fourth Estate," consisting of a stimulating and often controversial article on military affairs previously appearing in the civilian printed media. Members of the military community may or may not like what is said in the civilian press of their activities, but in a democratic society they must remain abreast of what the citizen is reading and thinking if they are to approach and execute their missions successfully.*

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In his study of the Pacific War, Edwin Hoyt sums up the role of Chester W. Nimitz as follows: "One could say that Halsey was the man to win a battle for you, Spruance was the man to win a campaign, but Nimitz was the man to win a war." He won that war in large part because the determination to win had been with him throughout his career. There is the story that a midshipman who used to box with Nimitz at Annapolis once gave him a bloody nose. That midshipman subsequently commented: "When I saw what I had done, I took off my gloves and walked out of the gym. I could see that he'd kill me if he could, so I just broke off the action." In an interview many years later, Nimitz summed up his philosophy in the words: "You always play to win. That's the only way."

No one could have expressed more bluntly the basic point about American strategy which I wish to make.

For the past several years the American public and American elites have been preoccupied with the problem of nuclear war. Newspapers and TV constantly emphasize the horrors and the dangers of nuclear conflict. Carl Sagan has expounded on the end of summer and Jonathan Schell on the end of the earth. Concern has once again focused on the escalating arms race, the

difficulty if not impossibility of limiting a nuclear war, and the urgent necessity of achieving nuclear arms control, of making nuclear weapons impotent. Foundations are showering academics with more millions than could ever usefully be spent to find a solution to these problems. At my university, for instance, thanks to the largesse of the Carnegie Corporation, colleagues of mine have been conducting for several years a major project, the title of which is "Avoiding Nuclear War."

Clearly no question is more important than preventing nuclear war. Clearly also, few, if any, public policy questions are less challenging or less interesting. Why is this the case? Because we know how to do it. The prevention of nuclear war is one goal which we have, so far, achieved. It is one of our few success stories in public policy. We have not solved the problems of recessions, deficits, unemployment, economic productivity, not to mention others such as acid rain, waste disposal, illegal immigration, housing shortages, grossly inferior educational systems, inadequate mass transport, or even racial discrimination. In none of these fields have we achieved our goals. But we have prevented nuclear war, and we have prevented it without suffering major losses to the freedom and prosperity of ourselves or our allies. In 1945, in 1950, in 1960, in 1970, informed and experienced people again and again said that this would be impossible, that unless nuclear weapons were abolished or there were some other dramatic change in the international scene, nuclear war was inevitable. (The most famous but far from atypical prediction of this genre was C. P. Snow's assertion in 1960 that, "Within, at the most, 10 years, some of these bombs are going off. I am saying this as responsibly as I can. *That* is the certainty.")

The magnitude of this achievement is historically unprecedented and largely unrecognized. The past four decades have seen the longest



sustained period in modern Western history without war between the major powers.' As far as the maintenance of peace is concerned, we must have been doing something right. What is now needed are not emotional declamations on the horrors of nuclear war, of which no one needs convincing, but rather serious study of recent history to ascertain what it is we have done that has enabled us so far to avoid nuclear war and what lessons of that experience tell us we must do in order to continue to avoid nuclear war in the future.

Given the nature of the problem, however, three cautionary notes are in order. First, past success is no reason for complacency and for stopping doing what we have been doing to prevent war. Second, there is always the possibility that as a result of changing conditions what has worked in the past may not work in the future, and one has to be alert to that possibility and prepared to deal with it. Third, conceivably what has worked in the past may by its very success, through a pattern of cyclical interaction, generate failure in the future. One has to be sensitive to that danger. Even with all these caveats, one can only be impressed by what has not happened, although some people remain profoundly dissatisfied with the success which we have achieved and unwilling to learn how we achieved it. They passionately demand a certainty that we cannot have.

This 40 years of success in preventing nuclear war contrasts rather dramatically with our 40 years of failure in winning conventional war. The record is not a happy one: two major conventional wars, one ending in stalemate, the other in total defeat; a record of blunders and failures in smaller operations: the Iran rescue mission, the massacre of the Marines in Beirut, the air strike that followed that tragedy, the *Mayaguez* rescue, the *Pueblo* seizure, the Son Tay raid, to name only the more recent and the more notable. That we point to our successful invasion of a small island defended by a few hundred poorly armed construction troops as evidence of our military prowess only underlines the extent of our failures. This seemingly dismal record has prompted a whole series of sarcastic journalistic headlines: "The Joint Chiefs of Staff: In 35 years, they've never won a war" (*Chicago Tribune*); "Why Johnny can't fight and Uncle Sam can't win" (*New Republic*); "Can't Anybody Here Run a War?" (*U.S. News & World Report*). In a more serious vein, Edward Luttwak in *The Pentagon and the Art of War* (Simon and Schuster, 1984)

alleges that "Vast sums of money and the true dedication of many have gone into the upkeep of American military power, only to yield persistent failure in the conduct of war." While it may be more important to avoid nuclear war, it clearly would appear to be more difficult to win conventional wars, to use military force effectively in small or modest sized encounters.

**B**efore wringing our hands in despair over the extent of our military incapacity, however, it would be well to put this record in context by raising three questions.

First, is the record of military incompetence really as bad as has been suggested? In fact, it is not totally black. We did not win either of our prolonged major wars, but with a few exceptions, of which the disastrous advance to the Yalu is most notable, our armed forces did win the overwhelming bulk of their tactical engagements. "You know you never defeated us on the battlefield," Col. Harry Summers quotes himself as saying to his North Vietnamese negotiating counterpart in Hanoi as South Vietnam collapsed in April 1975. He reports: "The North Vietnamese colonel pondered this remark a moment. 'That may be so,' he replied, 'but it is also irrelevant.' " Something is certainly wrong with the way in which a war is fought if unbroken tactical successes lead to unmitigated strategic defeat. Another form of military operation in which the U.S. has been involved is the brief, isolated military intervention, often in the nature of a rescue mission, carried out against armed opposition. Here the U.S. has virtually no successes to record. There are, finally, larger-scale order-restoring and peace-keeping interventions, such as Lebanon in 1958, the Dominican Republic in 1965, Lebanon again in 1982 and 1983, Grenada in 1983. The first two would have to be counted as military successes, the third as ambiguous, the fourth as disastrous in part because it ceased being a peace-keeping operation, and the fifth as a success. Overall, the U.S. record is not as bad as it may seem, but it still is not very good.

Second, is the U.S. record in military operations over the past several decades any worse than that of other major powers? The French lost major wars in Indochina and Algeria, although they won tactically in Algeria even as we did in Vietnam. The Soviets intervened successfully in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, but got bogged down in Afghanistan. The Chinese fought us to a stalemate in 1951, administered a rather neat military drubbing to the Indians in 1962, but did

not exactly distinguish themselves against the Vietnamese in 1979. The British retreated under fire from Aden and have not been able to pacify Northern Ireland. They did, however, score what are widely perceived to be victories in two significant wars: the counter-guerrilla war in Malaysia in the 1950s and the Falklands war in 1982. Their success in the Falklands, however, only equalled what the United States succeeded in doing in Korea: restoring the status quo ante. Yet the Falklands is generally viewed as a triumphant military victory for the British and it certainly was an immense political plus for Margaret Thatcher, while Korea is viewed as at best a military stalemate and was a major political liability for Harry Truman and his party. Why these differences in perception and political impact? Perhaps because the fighting in the Falklands came to a definitive end with an Argentine surrender as the status quo ante was restored while that in Korea dragged on for two years before ending in a negotiated armistice. Perhaps also because unlike the U.S. the British never expanded their war aims beyond restoration of the status quo ante and hence did not look bad when they did not achieve anything beyond that. In any event, in the years since World War II, no major power has had an unalloyed string of military successes. While maybe not the worst among the major powers, the American record still does not compare all that favorably to the records of other powers.

Third, is American military incompetence since World War II any greater than it was earlier in our history? Or can we take solace in the thought that this is the way in which we have always behaved? We have all been taught that at least before 1946 the United States never lost a war. At the very least, that claim stretches a point for the years 1812 to 1815. In addition, looking back over American military history, one can find repeated instances of strategic blindness, tactical stupidity, gross deficiencies in training and discipline, incompetent and vainglorious leadership, and sheer cowardice. One can also find many instances of just the opposite. It would, however, be hard to make the case that war and the military arts have been a sector of human activity where Americans have distinguished themselves compared to other peoples. We do not fall in the Spartan, Roman, Prussian tradition. By and large, the virtues of American civilization have not been the military virtues and this has been reflected in American military performance. The American "Revolution," as one standard history

states, "was fought in a folly of mismanagement and direction." Our victory in Europe in World War II, another historian, Russell F. Weigley, concludes, "was more expensive and more often postponed than it might have been, because American military skills were not as formidable as they could have been." More generally, as measured in a variety of ways, German army units in World War II consistently outfought American army units (as well as those of other Allied armies). That is a tough standard, for among modern peoples the Germans seem to have a unique capability for war. "He who has not fought the Germans," says a British military aphorism, "does not know war." If we ever have to fight Germans again, happily more are likely to be fighting with us than against us. Yet the record is still disturbing. As Martin van Creveld has bluntly put it: "the American officer corps of World War II was less than mediocre . . . Far too many officers had soft jobs in the rear, far too few commanded at the front. Those who did command at the front were, as the official history frankly admits and the casualty figures confirm, often guilty of bad leadership. Between them and their German opposite numbers there simply is no comparison possible."

At least in some dimensions, American military incompetence is thus not entirely of recent origin. The image of total success before 1946 may be even less valid than the image of total failure since 1946. Yet the differences in success and the differences in perceptions of success and failure still remain to be explained. They became more noticeable more recently because with the exception of the War of 1812 (where Jackson's victory at the end obscured our earlier military failings), we did win our previous wars.

**W**e are thus still left with the question: Why have we been so successful in preventing nuclear war but so unsuccessful in winning conventional wars? Is success in one conceivably linked to failure in the other? In the 1980s a rather intense debate has developed over the reasons for our record of military failure. This debate has largely focused on the question whether the fault lies primarily with our political leadership and its policies, on the one hand, or with the military forces and their leadership, on the other. The former approach, which I will term the "all or nothing" approach, is largely concerned with the failure to achieve victory in our major wars in Korea and Vietnam. It is highly popular among military officers and reflects the extent to which

the Vietnam syndrome, which has faded away in most other areas of American life, remains alive and well in the Pentagon. This view has been articulated by several chiefs of staff; it was set forth succinctly by Secretary Weinberger in his November 1984 Press Club speech in which he listed the six conditions under which American forces should be committed to combat; and it has been elaborated in highly sophisticated terms by various military writers. According to this view, the absence of military success is due primarily to two factors.

First, the political leadership, that is, the administrations in charge, failed to mobilize the American public in support of the war, among other things failing to secure declarations of war from Congress which would have committed the country to winning the war. The country was divided, and the military suffered as a result. Never again, consequently, should the U.S., as Weinberger put it, commit its forces without "national unity of purpose" and "firm national resolve." Before we again send our forces out to fight, he went on to say, "there must be some reasonable assurance that we will have the support of the people and their elected representatives in Congress. We cannot fight a battle with Congress at home while asking our troops to win a war overseas, or, as in the case of Vietnam, in effect asking our troops not to win but just to be there." "All of America's previous wars," Col. Summers argued in *On Strategy* (U.S. Army War College, 1981), "were fought in the heat of passion. Vietnam was fought in cold blood, and that was intolerable to the American people." The commitment of forces must involve not just the calculation of government but the passion of a people.

The second source of failure the "all or nothing" school focuses on is the political constraints imposed on military action in limited wars such as Korea and Vietnam. The advocates of this approach attack the whole limited war philosophy that developed in the 1950s and 1960s. Once war is declared, victory must be pursued. Once it is necessary, as Weinberger said, "to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of winning." While people are reluctant to push the point hard, the clear implication is that once the issue comes to arms, the military should have a relatively free hand to achieve their objectives without political restraints of the sort that made victory impossible in Korea and Vietnam.

The alternative approach locates the source of military failure not in politics but in the military

itself. This view, as one might expect, is found more often among civilians than among officers. Its exponents include many of those who have been identified with the so-called military reform movement of the past few years. It has been articulated in its most dramatic form by Edward Luttwak. Whatever other factors may contribute to American military losses, Luttwak argues, "the armed forces have failed us . . . the failure of the entire military structure and command system—not just leaders now gone but institutions still unchanged—looms large and unforgivable." The argument here is that military failure stems from the over-bureaucratization of the military establishment, its stress on producing managers rather than warriors, its reliance on mass and technology rather than strategy and operational skill, its organizational redundancy and complexity, its devotion to bureaucratic harmony and paperwork, its pitiful and ridiculously small ratio of combat power to support structure. The American military, in this picture, is fat, complacent, and, for all its weapons, quite unprepared intellectually and psychologically to wage war successfully. Drastic reforms in personnel selection, rotation, education and training, organization and command structure are required to turn this glumphy mass into an effective fighting force. Most necessary of all is a drastic shift in the pervading spirit and ethos of the officer corps. What is needed is a lean, mean, and deft military establishment, on the models of the Israeli armed forces, the Wehrmacht of World War II, and the professional core of the British Army.

The combined effect of the "all or nothing" and the "lean, mean, and deft" explanations of American military failure is to make it almost impossible for the U.S. to employ military force abroad. Secretary Weinberger declared that he was focusing on the problem of using U.S. military force in gray area conflicts, but he then defined criteria which would, if applied with only modest rigor, virtually limit the use of those forces to the defense of U.S. territory. Reluctance to recommend the use of military force is one of the most valuable, enduring, and endearing characteristics of American military leaders. But as we know from the history of the 1930s, there is also such a thing as being too reluctant to fight. The record of the past three decades plus the diagnosis of the "lean, mean, and deft" crowd, on the other hand, raise real questions about the capacity of the American military to fight. The argument has been made, for instance, that whatever the merits of retaliating or not retaliating in response to

terrorist attacks, the U.S. should not retaliate because inevitably that action will be goofed up, the wrong targets will be hit, civilian casualties will be excessive, American losses will be too great, and the whole effort will end in humiliation and be counter-productive to boot. In somewhat similar vein, in a critique of Weinberger's argument, the *New Republic* editorialized that the good reasons for being slow to act were not those given by Weinberger, but rather, in its phrase, "the incompetence of our forces after Korea." A situation thus exists where the military do not want to act because they fear the absence of public support, and the politicians do not want to act because they fear the absence of military competence.

No reasonable proponent of either the "all or nothing" view or the "lean, mean, and deft" view would deny some validity to the opposing argument. In fact, there is much validity to both arguments. The sources of failure have been both political and military. The problem comes with their prescriptions for reform. These are, I would argue, often quite unrealistic. The "all or nothing" remedies run right into the face of powerful political realities. There is, first, as Secretary Shultz put it in his riposte to Secretary Weinberger, "no such thing as guaranteed public support in advance." (Address at Yeshiva University, December 9, 1984.) There will be many times when an administration can and must act promptly and cannot wait to build support in Congress and the public. Any commitment of American forces to combat, apart from the defense of Japan, Western Europe, and North America, is bound to be controversial. Efforts to build public support for such an undertaking could as likely backfire as not: they could simply stimulate the opposition. In addition, even if public support exists for an initial commitment of forces to overseas combat, that support is not likely to last long. "A democracy," General George C. Marshall said 36 years ago, "cannot fight a Seven Years War." Our experience in two wars plus that of the French in Algeria and Indochina underlines the point. Indeed, one can argue that Secretary Weinberger has it backward: public support is not the prerequisite for successful military action; successful and decisive military action is the prerequisite for public support. And if that military action is not successful in a short period of time, that support will evaporate. Whether or not Congress has declared war will not make any significant difference.

The "all or nothing" school is also unrealistic in the extent to which it suggests that presidents

will give free rein to their generals in the conduct of military operations. The world is too closely interlinked for them to allow that to happen, and because it is so closely interlinked, presidents have the means of command and control to prevent it from happening. Nothing is politically more risky for a president than the commitment of troops. If this is successful, he will be a hero; if it fails, it will be his fault, as it was with Presidents Truman, Johnson, and Carter, unless he is able, as President Reagan was with the Marines in Beirut, to deflect criticism by fast political footwork and a counter-balancing military success. These considerations normally lead presidents to be cautious about undertaking military actions in the first place. They also necessarily lead presidents to insist on the maintenance of tight controls and constraints on military action to guard against escalation of the conflict or other politically damaging developments.

The principal prescriptions of the "lean, mean, and deft" advocates for reform of the military establishment have much the same unreality as the "all or nothing" prescriptions do for politics. The U.S. military establishment is a product of and reflects American geography, culture, society, economy, and history. A major, disastrous defeat may provoke a military establishment to reform itself. The U.S., however, has not suffered a military catastrophe; it has suffered a series of modest military reverses and the absence of military success. These do not have the same effect. One may well admire the extraordinary fighting power of the Wehrmacht against much more numerous and logistically far superior enemies in World War II, or that of the Israeli Defense Force against numerically superior Arab armies. But one should not be swept off one's feet by the romantic illusion that Americans can be taught to fight wars the way Germans, Israelis, or even British do. That would be both ahistorical and unscientific.

American strategy, in short, must be appropriate to our history and institutions, both political and military. It must not only be responsive to national needs but also reflect our national strengths and weaknesses. It is the beginning of wisdom to recognize both.

The United States is a big, lumbering, pluralistic, affluent, liberal, democratic, individualistic, materialistic if not hedonistic, and technologically supremely sophisticated society. Our military strategy should and, indeed, must be built upon these facts. The way we fight necessarily will reflect the way we live. The most salient criticism that can be brought against recent

American strategy is that it has deviated from these premises. For three decades, we have generally pursued, with the best of intentions and the best strategic analysis, a strategy for the use of conventional force that deviates sharply from earlier strategic traditions. It has emphasized not how to use force to win but how to avoid or to limit the use of force. In the nuclear age, these latter are clearly critical objectives, but they cannot be the only ones. The question we must ask is: What does the nature of American society and of earlier American strategic traditions tell us about how Americans can use force successfully?

A strategy designed to achieve this purpose should include at least five elements. First, so far as Third World involvements are concerned, the United States must pursue objectives it can hope to achieve quickly and use means that minimize the time required to achieve those objectives. We must aim for a first round knockout. Public opinion will not support a prolonged "slow bleed" of American blood. Secretary Weinberger and other leaders of the Reagan administration castigate the War Powers Act, which, among other things, makes it illegal for the president to commit U.S. troops to combat overseas for more than 60 days without the explicit consent of Congress. That legislation, however, reflects political reality. If a president is in serious doubt whether he can accomplish his objectives within 60 days, he would be well advised to reconsider those objectives. U.S. wars in the future may or may not be limited in goals, geographic scope, or material resources. They will inevitably be limited in time. This means that when the U.S. applies force, it must be able to apply it expeditiously. Hence, high priority should be given to creating the transport capacity and support which will enable the U.S. to deploy substantial numbers of troops to Third World trouble spots in very short periods of time. If we are going to win, we are going to have to win quickly.

Second, from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century, the American military tradition stressed the central importance of the offensive. This was appropriate for a rising industrial power. After World War II or, more precisely, after the failure of the advance to the Yalu in 1950, the commitment to the offensive began to fade in American military thinking, at least with respect to conventional conflicts. It is rather striking that, in contrast, the offensive came to be viewed as the only legitimate strategy in nuclear war. Even more striking is the fact that those who have been most in favor of exclusive reliance on the offensive in

nuclear war are also those who are most in favor of exclusive reliance on the defensive in conventional conflicts. Apart from strategic nuclear war, the cult of the defensive permeated American military thinking. It was evident in Vietnam. It has been painfully evident in our preparations for a European conflict. Few things could be more debilitating than NATO strategic planning which has provided for only defensive conventional action reinforced by an increasingly incredible threat of nuclear escalation. If the United States is going to achieve its objectives in timely fashion, however, in either Europe or in the Third World, it must engage in prompt offensive action against the central enemy targets. For 100 years after Scott took the war to the heart of the enemy in 1847, the offensive aimed at the center of enemy power was the core of American strategy. It has, unfortunately, been lost during the last 30 years.

Third, the United States is the most technologically advanced society in the world. U.S. strategy can and should reflect this fact. In this connection, it is useful to recall the repeated comments made by North Vietnamese military officers on what they feared most from us during the Vietnam war. Almost without exception, they were, first, the mobility we had from our helicopters, second, the destructive firepower of our artillery, and third, the physical destruction and, more important, the psychologically crippling effects of the B-52 bombings. In effect, the Vietnamese say: "When we could get you, the United States, to fight our sort of small unit, man-to-man war in the jungle, we could beat you. When you stuck to the type of warfare which you dominated, we couldn't." The conclusion to be drawn, I suggest, is that if we should unfortunately ever become involved in a comparable situation, we should capitalize on American technological prowess and not think that we can win by sending out small counter-insurgent teams to best the guerrillas at the type of war they know best.

Fourth, the United States is a big country and we should fight wars in a big way. One of our great advantages is our mass. We should not hesitate to use it. Secretary Weinberger is absolutely right in rejecting the slow, gradual commitment of limited units of force over a prolonged period of time. Since 1815 we have never (with the partial exception of the Korean war) fought a country bigger than us. If we can avoid a central conflict with the Soviet Union, it is unlikely that we will have to do so in the immediate future. We won World War II because we were able to overwhelm the Germans and the

Japanese with men, machines, and material. Reviewing our military history, General David Jones, former chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, pointed to the way in which we rather consistently mismanaged our military operations and concluded that in the past we won, in his words, "by being bigger, not smarter." He is right. Bigness not brains is our advantage, and we should exploit it. If we have to intervene, we should intervene with overpowering force. As everyone points out, there were goofs galore in the Grenada operation, but when you deploy 7,000 troops against the minuscule opposition that existed on Grenada, you can afford the goofs. Our successful intervention in 1964 in the Dominican Republic was similar: we deployed 23,000 troops there in a few days, although it was not clear that anyone on the island particularly wanted to fight us. In 1958 we deployed about 17,000 troops into Beirut; in 1983 we deployed less than one-tenth that number. The 1958 intervention was a success; the 1983 intervention ended in tragedy. Surely the differences in the numbers account in part for the differences in outcome. In this connection, I do not find it necessarily bad that it is almost impossible for us to undertake any military operation, however trivial, without all four services getting into the act. Redundancy is, from one view, duplication, but from another view, it is insurance, reinforcement, and strength. We can afford four services; we can afford four air forces. When the need exists, we should use them all.

Finally, if American forces have to be used, they should be used to achieve military objectives. Military forces are not primarily instruments of communication to convey signals to an enemy; they are instead instruments of coercion to compel him to alter his behavior.<sup>4</sup> Nor are they normally good instruments of political and social appeal, to win the hearts and minds of people. Military forces are designed to defeat opposing military forces; they are not very useful in the pursuit of most other goals. The American military tradition from Grant and Sherman to Eisenhower and Nimitz was that the major military goal was to seek out and destroy the enemy's military forces. This may at times lead, as the critics allege, to a total disregard of strategic maneuver and deception and to a commitment to attack head-on where the enemy is strong, but it does rest on the correct understanding that the principal purpose of military forces is to crush other military forces. Napoleon once observed that, "There are in Europe many good generals, but they see too many things at once. I see only one thing, namely the enemy's main body. I try to crush it, confident that secondary matters will then settle them-

selves." This spirit imbued American military and naval thinking in the past. It should be resurrected for the future.

The five key elements of American strategy that I have sketched out here are not new. Indeed, in many respects they are simply restatements of the traditional principles of war set forth in the manuals of all the services: the objective, offensive, mass, simplicity, economy of forces. They can almost be summed up in the familiar phrase about "getting thar fustest with the mostest." They do represent a shift back to more traditional American ways of thinking about strategy and the use of military force compared to those that have dominated strategic thinking in recent years.

My analysis has not addressed when or why we should use military force. Instead, it has attempted to focus on how we should use it, that is, what strategy should guide its use, if we have to use it. It in no way constitutes an argument for promiscuous intervention overseas, and, in fact, very few situations will justify the commitment of U.S. forces to combat. What I have argued is that when those situations arise, the U.S. should intervene rapidly, in an offensive mode, in a decisive manner, and so far as possible with overwhelming force, with a view to defeating enemy military forces in the shortest time possible. "You always play to win," said Nimitz. "That's the only way." Before 1951 it was also the American way, and both the imperatives of foreign policy and the necessities of domestic politics demand that American strategy once again be guided by that precept.

#### NOTES

1. See the comments of Paul Schroeder, "Does Murphy's Law Apply to History?" *Wilson Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (New Year's 1985): "The period of almost four decades without major war is significant in a way few laymen recognize. Since the second century A.D. under the Pax Romana, the Western world has known no long periods of general peace. The modern record was 38 years, nine months, and five days (June 22, 1815, to March 27, 1854), from the aftermath of Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo to the effective beginning of the Crimean War between the French and British, on one side, and tsarist Russia, on the other. That record was broken last year on May 15, 1984. The news media did not accord it the attention given to records achieved by Atlanta's Hank Aaron for home runs or Cincinnati's Pete Rose for base hits, but the fact is worth noting."

2. For a perceptive discussion of this important and neglected issue, see Gregory D. Foster, "The Effect of Deterrence on the Fighting Ethic," *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 10 (Winter 1984).

3. Caspar Weinberger, "The Uses of Military Power," Address, National Press Club, Washington, D.C., November 28, 1984.

4. For a penetrating analysis of how the purpose of American military action in Vietnam shifted from counterinsurgency to signaling, see Stephen Peter Rosen, "Vietnam and the American Theory of Limited War," *International Security* (Fall 1982).

## BOOK REVIEWS

**The Army and Vietnam.** By Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr. 315 pages. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1986. \$26.50.

The author has devoted a good deal of research and thought to his subject. The result of his work, however, is disappointing—a long, rambling, one-sided discourse that lacks the balance, cohesion, and objectivity of a truly professional and scholarly book. His *bête noire* is what he calls “The Army Concept,” which he paints as a doctrinal mindset fixed rigidly on modern “mid-intensity” conventional warfare set in Western Europe against the Soviet Union; and his villains are “the Army brass” (whoever they are) on whom he blames all American shortcomings in Vietnam. This harangue continues for almost 300 pages. His tone, unfortunately, is abrasive, at times hostile, and essentially negative, a condition that may turn off many readers who otherwise might listen more carefully to what he is saying. Nonetheless, Major Krepinevich’s effort is a reassuring sign that there are vocal, thinking individuals in the Army who are taking a long hard look at our Vietnam experience, seeking lessons, asking tough questions, and trying to find better answers to current problems.

Krepinevich’s thesis is that the United States fought the wrong kind of war in Vietnam, employing predominantly heavy and sophisticated conventional forces, and concentrating the bulk of US resources against enemy regular forces (Viet Cong and North Vietnamese) in South Vietnam, as well as against North Vietnam itself (the US air war)—rather than making the major effort with lighter, less conventional forces in support of an American-South Vietnamese counterinsurgency (pacification) program aimed at providing lasting local security for the South Vietnamese people located in the most populous areas. Hardly a new thesis, the subject has been debated for years. Regrettably, Krepinevich throws little new light on the matter, building his case by overstating selected aspects that support his thesis, ignoring salient points that contradict it, and throughout denigrating as knaves or fools those he believes to be responsible for the failures he alleges. The result is a weak case that will persuade only the uninformed, or those who are eager to denounce the Vietnam War, the US military, or the US government. Mixed in with his main theme, however, are numerous excellent points and sound judgments regarding the American performance

in Vietnam that are worth remembering and heeding. The problem of sorting things out falls to the reader.

Although his principal target is the US Army, which he bashes constantly and unmercifully, many of the author’s basic concerns are really national failings, for example, a lack of understanding in our early years (the mid-1950s) in Vietnam of the nature of a “People’s War,” followed by a dearth of sound strategic thinking in the United States in the 1960s when we committed our military power in Southeast Asia. Certainly these failings were not limited to the Army. Another example is the assessment that overt armed intervention by China was the major threat to South Vietnam in that nation’s early years. This error was not solely an Army judgment—mindful of the Chinese intervention in Korea in 1950, the entire intelligence community debated this question for years. In the decade following the creation of South Vietnam in 1954, a long series of National Intelligence Estimates, produced by the Board of National Estimates under the aegis of the Director of Central Intelligence, warned of the growing internal insurgent threat in South Vietnam, but also propounded the likelihood of Chinese intervention, especially if the United States were to commit its power in Indochina. These estimates, almost obsessed with the possibility of Chinese intervention in Southeast Asia, reflected the views of the entire executive branch of the US government, within which the Army was only one voice among many.

Roughly half of Krepinevich’s book (four chapters) is devoted to the US advisory years in Vietnam, 1954-1965, while the other half (five chapters) concerns the 1965-1968 period when US combat power was committed. A concluding chapter discusses some alternative approaches that the United States might have used in Vietnam and tries to pull together some conclusions with relevance for the future. Thus his book ends essentially with the period immediately following the enemy offensive of Tet 1968 and omits the six and a half years from the latter part of 1968 to the demise of South Vietnam in the spring of 1975. This is not a minor omission, because the dramatic train of events of this period—in the United States, in Vietnam, and on the international stage—had an enormous effect on the ultimate outcome of the tragic story of Vietnam.

Despite its imperfections, however, the book has many strong points. The author’s analysis of

the priority need for paramilitary forces, as well as his strong endorsement of light infantry and ranger-type units in the counterinsurgency environment of Vietnam, are well done. Likewise his treatment of the employment of US Special Forces in Vietnam is worthy of note. In this connection, neither the US Army nor the US Special Forces themselves were ever in complete agreement as to how special forces talents should be exploited in Vietnam. The story of their actual employment and analysis of the less than optimal results are well chronicled in the book. This Special Forces story, incidentally, implies a more dynamic and flexibly thinking Army than the rigid, monolithic institution actually portrayed.

Krepinevich also does a good job of describing the difficult role of American advisers, particularly those of junior grade. For the most part our advisers performed nobly despite the fact that they were sometimes neglected, often overlooked, and seldom rewarded. Vietnam veterans who served as Special Forces troops or advisers, or both, will like this part of the book because it does recognize their unique problems and valuable contributions.

Another outstanding part of Krepinevich's book is his devastating critique of the so-called "strategy of attrition" adopted by the United States. As he brings out, it was never a strategy but more a matter of tactics; more importantly, it failed because the United States was unable to cripple the enemy's capability to wage a prolonged war. Other well-done elements of his book are his analysis of American operational weaknesses (overreliance on helicopters, coupled with not enough infantry movement on foot; overuse and misuse of firepower; and reluctance to operate at night are examples); his account of the US-South Vietnamese search for an effective response to insurgency; and his description of the adverse impact on our operational effectiveness of such US personnel policies as the short Vietnam tour.

In his discussion of US strategy in Southeast Asia and the allocation to various tasks of US resources in South Vietnam, particularly American ground combat troops, the author strongly favors a pacification-oriented allied effort from the beginning of US involvement. But he seems to believe that pacification, sometimes called "the other war," was separable from the so-called "big war," the battle of main forces, whereas, of course, they were always both integral parts of the same war. Moreover, he appears to overlook the fact that Hanoi, regardless of what the United States did, always had the option to escalate to a

higher level of conflict (or de-escalate to a lower level). Hanoi was determined to subjugate the South no matter how long it took or what it cost. For example, in 1964, Hanoi escalated, sending the first large NVA combat units down the Ho Chi Minh Trail (well before the United States committed its military power), hoping for a quick knockout during the disarray following President Diem's assassination in November 1963 and before the United States could intervene in strength.

Nevertheless, Krepinevich is quite right in saying that in the early crucial years, 1954-1959, we failed to recognize that the urgent threat to South Vietnam was the insurgency, not the external threat from the north. Had we concentrated on the insurgency with an effective program, we might have prevented the Viet Cong from sinking its roots so deeply in South Vietnam. By the time we woke up, it was too late to prevent deep and widespread penetrations by the Viet Cong. But even if we had succeeded earlier in thwarting the Viet Cong, we still would have been faced with the mainforce threat, the North Vietnamese Army, which in the end finally overran South Vietnam.

Ultimately, in the absence of a sound overall US strategy to counter potentially decisive initiatives by Hanoi (bearing in mind that Hanoi called the shots in South Vietnam) and take the strategic initiative away from Hanoi, the best of American efforts to advise and support our South Vietnamese allies could not guarantee success. There were also the facts that North Vietnam had more people than South Vietnam and, with sustained Soviet and Chinese support, greater potential to wage protracted war. This meant simply that, over the long haul, South Vietnam could not survive without continuing US support. The book reflects little awareness of these basic realities.

Further, a crippling naivete and lack of historical breadth and understanding suffuse the pages of this book. Although at times the author recognizes that there were many other US agencies besides the US Army involved in Vietnam—State, OSD, the JCS, AID, CIA, USIA, and the other armed services—he persists in pinning the blame for our national shortcomings in Vietnam squarely on the US Army. Moreover, he attributes these national inadequacies to a doctrinal mindset in the Army that neglected counterinsurgency in favor of modern conventional warfare—a simplistic theory to say the least.

Yet it is true that the United States has been confronted with a classic dilemma since the advent



of nuclear weapons: how best to meet the conflicting and quite different demands of possible but less likely war in Europe along with those stemming from more likely conflicts, particularly those in the lower spectrum of intensity. American military planners must weigh the relative risks to the United States and examine the geopolitical factors in each possible conflict area before deciding on the priorities that will govern the allocation of appropriate and available US forces and other resources to meet what appear to be our most critical needs worldwide. It is not an easy problem and there are no simple answers—the result is always a compromise because there are never enough US forces and resources to meet even reasonable and modest “requirements.”

Nonetheless we can and must do better with respect to the challenge of counterinsurgency, and this is Krepinevich's plea. We do lack adequate US doctrine for counterinsurgency and we do lack the high-level civilian-military intragovernmental organization needed to cope with situations such as those facing us in Central America and the Caribbean. We do need a special approach to the problem that will tap the considerable talents that are available to the United States, and we must dedicate the right kinds of resources to this task on a professional, long-term basis that will ensure continuity of cohesive effort. This is Krepinevich's message and it should be heeded.

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**America's First Battles, 1776-1965.** Edited by Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft. 450 pages. University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kans., forthcoming. \$29.95. (\$14.95 paper.)

The first battle in any future American war may be decisive, and accounts of first battles of past wars may suggest how best to prepare for such an encounter. The papers in this collection address this common proposition and others. The papers are the products of a working seminar held at the US Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, under the auspices of the Combat Studies Institute, the CGSC's history department. The papers also reflect the larger conviction of that institute that the study and analysis of military history is indispensable to effective preparation for war.

Not surprisingly, the papers confirm that the conduct of the United States Army in its first

battles in past wars indicates a general failure until now to prepare effectively for the coming of war. But the papers do much more than confirm that cliché of American military history. They show, in fact, that notwithstanding the general and familiar phenomenon of American unpreparedness at the beginning of most of the wars of the United States, the Army itself has been better prepared in doctrine and equipment than we have often supposed. The first battle of each new war has at least in some measure found the Army using previous experience and prewar preparation to good effect; unpreparedness has by no means been simple and complete. But to this reviewer the cumulative message of these analyses of past battles is that capitalizing on previous experience has until now been haphazard and fortuitous. There has never been enough genuinely rigorous and consistent thought about the past to make the Army's ability to capitalize on past wars nearly as effective as it might have been.

The Army's effectiveness in developing its own preparedness has been excessively a hit-or-miss matter. If we are to do better in future first battles, we must not only review history and experience more or less casually; we must genuinely *think* about them and their implications. Occasional reviews of history in the name of gaining the vicarious experience that it offers to guide our present and future conduct are not enough. For military history to serve the soldier well requires *thought* and *reflection* on history.

The American experience in World War I, examined in this anthology by Allan R. Millet through the lens provided by the battle of Cantigny, 28-31 May 1918, offers a case in point. When the 1st Division attacked the Cantigny salient to open the first major battle of the American Expeditionary Forces, it certainly did not do so without the benefit of what the Army took to be exploiting the lessons of history. The 1st Division was a far cry from the badly trained and undisciplined force that had fought the Army's first battle of the Civil War at Bull Run on 21 July 1861. Since the Civil War, a hierarchy of schools had developed to review among other matters the history of European war and to prepare an appropriate American operational and tactical doctrine and appropriate training methods against the contingency of just such a confrontation with a European army as Cantigny represented. For over three and a half years before Cantigny, American officers had been able to learn about the European conduct of the war in

which they now found themselves engaged. For almost a year before Cantigny, the 1st Division had been training diligently in France.

Nevertheless, although Cantigny proved a small-scale American victory, Millett's account of it reveals serious deficiencies in the Army's use of history to prepare for battle, deficiencies that were to plague the AEF throughout the war. The deficiencies were mainly those of not thinking carefully enough about what history signified. Before World War I, the Army's study of European and its own experience produced a tactical doctrine emphasizing the value of maneuver warfare. This doctrine found its wartime expression when General John J. Pershing, AEF Commanding General, advocated training in open warfare for his troops. The British and French, Pershing believed, had by 1917 and 1918 been so long imprisoned in the straitjacket of trench warfare that their armies were no longer prepared for any other kind of combat. The distinctive contributions of the AEF would spring from tactical readiness for a return to open warfare and therefore from an ability to execute and exploit a breakthrough that would restore decisiveness to the war.

But Pershing's open warfare ideas were impractical. They were unsuitable to the conditions of the Western Front and to the military technology of the time. In practice, the training of the AEF mainly reflected these harsh realities, Pershing notwithstanding. Not only the British and French instructors who were employed extensively to train American troops but American instructors as well had to tailor their training to the conditions of the trenches and to a pace of war such that even if a trench system were broken, another would lie ahead before the attackers could create a deep exploitation of their original gains. The inexperience of the American Army aggravated the problems. Cantigny, the first American battle, established a pattern: In spite of Pershing's notions, the Americans fought best when they could fight a set-piece battle thoroughly in accord with British and French trench-warfare tactics. As soon as a battle progressed beyond a carefully prepared set-piece encounter, American commanders tended to lose tactical control and the cohesion of American forces began to disintegrate. To the extent that Pershing's advocacy of open warfare tactics actually influenced training, it did little more than engender confusion and increase the danger that tactics would degenerate into chaos.

Pershing, in short, had been influenced by history and experience, but he had not really thought out their implications. The sequel, developed by Jay Luvaas's essay on Buna, 19 November 1942 to 2 January 1943, and Martin Blumenson's on the Kasserine Pass, 30 January to 22 February 1943, involves yet another kind of failure to draw out implications, and thus not thinking enough. Studying the history of the World War I experience during the 1920s and 1930s made for too great an expectation of static, trench-style warfare in tactical doctrine at the outset of the next war. Just when advances in technology made Pershing's dream of open warfare a possibility far more realistic than it had been in 1917-1918, once more the Army failed to be sufficiently reflective in its use of history, expected historical experiences to repeat themselves too literally, and did not pay enough heed to the special technological conditions of World War I that need no longer apply in an era of superior tanks and superior aircraft.

As is appropriate to a book about battles and to the mission of the Command and General Staff College, this volume concerns itself mainly with tactical issues. Together, in fact, its essays provide one of the best summaries of the evolution of the American Army's tactical training and doctrine that we have ever had. Less frequently, the editors' and authors' concern for the military uses of history extends also into strategy, most notably in Ira D. Gruber's essay on the battle of Long Island, 27 August 1776. Gruber details how an unresolved conflict between a strategy aimed at the destruction of the enemy army and a strategy of limited war for territorial advantage in the strategic thought of the late 18th-century British army helped deny that army the fruits of tactical success in America.

While focusing on first battles, the essays in fact range well beyond the first battles of the major American wars to include reviews of tactical and to a lesser extent strategic developments between wars and to trace also, at least in broad outline, wartime developments after the first battles. Another of the salient themes is that the deficiencies displayed in first battles have too often persisted through much of the subsequent action in our wars. In World War I, the contradictions in American tactical doctrine and training were never resolved; in the American Revolution, the contradictions in British strategy were never resolved; in the War of 1812, the Mexican War, and the Civil War, the toughness of

the individual soldier and the occasional appearance of inspired leadership had to make up for inadequacies in tactical doctrine from beginning to end; in the Vietnam War, shortcomings in the mobility of airmobile troops once they were on the ground showed up in the initial battle of the Ia Drang Valley, 18 October to 26 November 1965, and were never altogether remedied. The most successful profiting from initial mistakes occurred in World War II and the Korean War, which suggests that the modern Army has developed institutional means of profiting from early wartime errors superior to those it had in the past. Nevertheless, the obstacles to learning from mistakes under the pressures of war are so imposing that here is yet another reason to be as diligent as possible in thinking out the relevant tactical and strategic issues before the first battle of a future war.

The editors and authors are to be commended for advancing the case for soldiers' study of military history by creating a volume of one of the most useful varieties of military history. In the sense that the volume is a history of battles, it may appear superficially as an embodiment of the old drum-and-trumpet style of military history rather than of the new military history of soldiers in politics and society. But its battle essays are written with so probing a development of the roots of tactics and strategy in military thought and institutions that what the book really represents is a heartening fusion of the old and the new in military history.

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**Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age.** Edited by Peter Paret. 941 pages. Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, N.J., 1986. \$45.00 (\$12.95 paper).

There has been a renaissance—some would even say a revolution—in military strategic thinking since the end of the Vietnam War. One of the results is that conventional (i.e. non-nuclear) military strategy, dismissed as irrelevant since the beginning of the atomic age, has finally come back into its own.

Several factors sparked this revival. One was the search for answers for what went wrong in Vietnam. Another was the realization that with Soviet attainment of nuclear parity, so-called "strategic" weapons were no longer strategic. These factors in turn sparked intellectual ferment

within the armed forces themselves. Among many others, Dr. Phil Crowl at the Naval War College, Lieutenant Colonel Dave MacIssac at the Air University, and Colonels Ralph Allen, Keith Barlow, Wally Franz, and Chuck Kriete at the Army War College pioneered the rediscovery of the fundamentals of military strategic thinking in long-neglected classic military theories and in the historical texts from which those theories were derived.

This rediscovery was aided by Princeton University's 1975 publication of a new translation of *On War*, Carl von Clausewitz's seminal analysis of the nature and theory of war. Based on original texts resurrected earlier by Muenster University Professor Werner Halweg, this translation was the work of Oxford University Professor Michael Howard and Stanford University Professor Peter Paret (with a commentary and reader's guide provided by the late Bernard Brodie of UCLA). It not only eliminated the distortions that had marred earlier works, but also for the first time provided a readable work in plain English.

Now Princeton University and Professor Paret have resurrected yet another classic military work—this time Edward Mead Earle's *Makers of Modern Strategy*, first published in 1943. My son's highlighting and marginal notations in the copy he was issued at West Point over a decade ago are reminders that this work not only helped lead our military leaders to victory on the battlefields of World War II, it also kept alive at least an acquaintance with classic military thought during the nuclear doldrums of the intervening years.

Those years took their toll, and not only on the military. This was especially evident during the conference in March 1986 at Stanford University held to mark the reissue of this classic. The conference, entitled "War in History and War Today," included as participants some sixty military theorists, strategists, and historians from the United States and abroad. Among the academic historians a common theme was their skepticism as to whether history had anything to offer. They seemed to have lost faith in themselves and in their profession. Interestingly, it was the military participants—including, by the way, Colonel "Hooper" Adams from the Army War College—that called these attitudes to task.

"Why do you have so many self-doubts?" asked German General Gerd Schmueckle, former NATO Deputy Supreme Commander, who went on to say that he was "surprised by the way nearly all the speakers dealt in such pessimistic terms."

Noting American willingness to incorporate European ideas into their strategic thinking, he reminded the conference that in NATO "America has sustained a union of nations that is unique in human history."

Someone, perhaps Paret himself, who wrote a new chapter on Clausewitz for the revised edition of *Makers of Modern Strategy*, ought to have reminded the conference what Clausewitz had to say about the uses of history. "Historical examples clarify everything," Clausewitz said. "This is particularly true of the art of war." He went on to list four ways history could be useful.

"First," he said, "a historical example may simply be used as an *explanation* . . . to throw the necessary light on [an] idea." He went on to say that "historical truth is not even essential here: an imaginary case will do as well." "Second, it may serve to show the *application* of an idea." Here again, "authenticity . . . is not essential." "Third, one can appeal to historical fact . . . to prove the *possibility* of some phenomenon . . . a purpose sufficiently met, as a rule, by the simple statement of an undisputed fact." "Fourth and last," he concluded, "the detailed presentation of [a] historical event . . . [makes] it possible to deduce a doctrine." This, Clausewitz reminds us at some length, is an extremely difficult task, for "care must be taken that every aspect bearing on the truth at issue is fully and . . . carefully assembled, so to speak, before the reader's eyes."

And if Clausewitz was too old-fashioned for the conference participants, they could have turned to a more contemporary source, Harvard Professors Richard Neustadt and Ernest May's recently published *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers* (The Free Press, 1986). They recommended dividing the facts at hand into the known, the unclear, and the presumed. Likenesses and differences of historical analogies are then examined. With these ground rules in mind, Neustadt and May, taking a lead from Harvard Business School methods, advocate the value of historical case studies for the proper employment of history in decision-making.

And this is what *Makers of Modern Strategy* is all about. Under the editorship of Peter Paret, with the help of Gordon Craig and Felix Gilbert, the book has been extensively revised. Of its 28 case studies, three are reprinted from the original book—those by Henry Guerlac on Vauban, R. R. Palmer on Frederick the Great, and Edward Mead Earle on Adam Smith. Gilbert's article on Machiavelli, Neumann's on Engels and Marx, Craig's on Delbrueck, and Holborn's on the Prusso-German school have been rewritten. The

remainder are new, among them articles on Napoleon, on Jomini, on Allied and Axis strategies in World War II, on the nuclear strategists, and on revolutionary war.

But what can these case studies do for us? True, they can't provide precise analogies that tell us exactly how to prosecute a future war. But they can make us think. If the counterinsurgency crowd had read Gilbert on Machiavelli, they might not have been so enamored of Sun Tzu. Both Machiavelli and Sun Tzu concentrate on ruses and deceptions to be used in wars between princes. But insurgencies and counterinsurgencies (and low-intensity conflict) are wars between peoples. In like manner if current enthusiasts of maneuver warfare read Gunther Rothenberg on Schlieffen, they might not be quite so sanguine about "deep strike." Schlieffen, like today's number-crunchers, sought to eliminate chance and friction (Murphy's Law) from the battlefield. But there is still more to war than those things that can be counted and quantified.

Clausewitz reminded us that military theories are "meant to educate the mind of the future commander, or, more accurately, to guide him in his self-education, not to accompany him to the battlefield." The same is true of military history. As Craig and Gilbert put it in their concluding essay, "History can never tell us how to act, but [it] is prolific in case studies from which we can draw certain ideas and cautionary prescriptions."

When the original *Makers of Modern Strategy* was published in 1943, it was a welcome adjunct to the personal libraries of strategic decisionmakers, most of whom were professional military officers well-grounded in military history and in classic military theory. One of the factors that drove the post-Vietnam renaissance in military strategic thinking was the realization that this foundation had been eroded after World War II. An entire generation of officers, with little knowledge of either history or theory, were no longer masters of their profession.

That's now changing. Military history and military theory are now being reemphasized throughout the military education system. And Peter Paret's new *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* will help to fill that dangerous and potentially fatal void. It belongs on the bookshelf of every military professional.

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**Against All Enemies: Interpretations of American Military History From Colonial Times to the Present.** Edited by Kenneth J. Hagan and William R. Roberts. 394 pages. Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., 1986. \$18.50 (paper).

Although this collection of essays addresses civil-military relations and occasionally national strategy, it is primarily an institutional treatment of the development of the United States Army. Another work in the successful Greenwood series on military history, this book consists of 18 chapters that selectively survey the American military experience from colonial times to 1980. Its contributors are acknowledged experts in the historical periods addressed; a few of them present interpretations that they have previously advanced in earlier, longer works in their areas of expertise.

*Against All Enemies* is a meaningful contribution to military history literature for several reasons. For example, as the editors note, one of the more instructive themes discussed in several of the essays is the manner in which Americans have fought wars. It would have been helpful to examine in more detail why differing methods of applying force have evolved, and to illustrate that maneuver and mass are not mutually exclusive and that firepower and mobility can be complementary. However, the development of this theme is one of the strengths of the book. The gradual development of military professionalism is another important theme, and one that is periodically emphasized. The last chapter contains some cogent observations, not only on the American strategy in Vietnam but also on several criticisms of the Army regarding that war which have been advanced by commentators and analysts. This excellent and penetrating analysis captivates and entices, leaving the reader regretting that the coverage is so brief.

In a survey of such broad scope, selective treatments are necessary. This inevitably leads to subjective judgments regarding balance. In this instance, while the World War II chapter is a splendid treatment of coalition war planning, it is too brief for a war of such importance and slights useful discussions of campaign strategies. Similarly, military assistance programs, developments in military educational circles during the period 1970-80, and analysis of those tactical developments that strongly influenced strategy are important enough to warrant inclusion in the book.

Professional soldiers can profit by reading *Against All Enemies*. It will capture their interest

and spur them on to further reading in depth in specialized areas.

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**The Challenge of Command: Reading for Military Excellence.** By Roger H. Nye. 240 pages. Avery Press, Wayne, N.J., 1986. \$9.95.

"You can't say later on in life I will start studying. You have got to start in the beginning." Few would disagree with General Omar Bradley's admonition to self-development. And many have asked "What should I read?" in search of a starting point or a guide to what others have found to be professionally worthwhile. By providing an organized answer to that question, Colonel Roger Nye has performed a great service to the military professional. For young officers, Nye makes a convincing, even inspiring, case for professional reading—reading to develop "a clear sense of themselves as military men with responsibilities and opportunities that are unique in American life." Reading to gain a vision of self as a professional soldier can inspire a career of service, give meaning to life while lifting us beyond our day-to-day jobs, spur us to excellence, guide us into the status of a true professional, and even give us style, according to Colonel Nye. Professional reading can also be fun.

Drawing upon the experiences of thoughtful soldiers he has known as well as his impressive grasp of a huge military professional reading list, Colonel Nye relates his answers to the question "What should I read?" to the central vision of the military professional as the commander. He considers the main roles of the commander to be tactician, warrior, moral arbiter, strategist, and mentor.

Colonel Nye has organized his text to accomplish several things for the reader: "(1) give an overview of the command phenomena; (2) analyze the field into manageable topical chapters; (3) suggest major problems and trends in each topic; (4) highlight some of the best books on each topic, based on readability, substance, and availability; (5) raise questions for reflection and discussion; and (6) include a detailed bibliography for ease in locating books that have been given an abbreviated cite in the text." For the most part, he has succeeded admirably.

In successive chapters, he develops central questions and issues which should serve as

guideposts for anyone who tackles his suggested readings. He provokes the reader as learner to read on, and he provides the commander as mentor with potential discussion topics for use in guiding others.

Colonel Nye would have us read not only history and literature but also the social and behavioral sciences. He suggests classics as well as contemporary books. Fiction and non-fiction works are found among his references. Each chapter refers briefly to several books which are especially topical. Colonel Nye relies most heavily on books of history and literature, although the works he has selected from other fields such as philosophy and the behavioral sciences are, for the most part, of central importance to their respective topics. However, better coverage could have been provided for the reader through more careful selection from the social and behavioral sciences. For example, one of America's premier political scientists, James MacGregor Burns, has written an excellent book, *Leadership*, which is an exceptional synthesis of political science, history, biography, psychology, and sociology in terms of how each illuminates leadership. This book, which is merely listed in Nye's final bibliography, could have been highlighted within the text and made a recommended reading instead of others such as *Leadership and the One-Minute Manager*, which is catchy but oversimplified. Neither the study nor the practice of leadership is simple.

Although Colonel Nye's definition of command is "to direct with authority," his notions of command as an art properly include many skills, among them the ability to influence other people and, ideally, to gain their willing support for the commander's intent. However, Colonel Nye chose to omit the role of leader from his vision of the commander. Thus there is no separate chapter devoted to the commander as leader. The only place where he addresses leadership directly is in his chapter on the company commander. This is unfortunate since there are several misconceptions about leadership in the officer corps today which Colonel Nye could have addressed to our collective advantage. For example, many officers tend to derogate the formal study of leadership. Some argue "it's all just common sense." Other simply believe that leadership is all a matter of the character and qualities of the leader, which aren't very malleable. A third and very important misconception is that leadership is the same at all levels. In other words, many act as if there is no need to learn new leadership skills and perspectives as one progresses to higher organi-

zational levels. Colonel Nye may have inadvertently reinforced some of these misconceptions by his treatment of leadership as part of company command. Although Colonel Nye himself recognizes the importance of leadership skills to the commander, he could have made the point more clearly and emphatically by writing a separate chapter on the role of the commander as leader.

Another potential drawback to *The Challenge of Command* is its heavy reliance on military classics that are out of print. The publisher of Colonel Nye's book plans to reprint a few of these, but the officer who is away from Army centers of learning may be unable to find some of the more useful works.

Some of the most vivid and insightful accounts of combat leadership during the Vietnam War are missing from Colonel Nye's bibliography. Although he cites Philip Caputo's *A Rumor of War*, useful for its treatment of guilt, and *The Lionheads*, a fictional account of the commander as moral arbiter, he has overlooked two books by Frederick Downs, *The Killing Zone*, probably the best available account of infantry combat at the platoon and company level, and *Aftermath*, a gripping account of the consequences of physical and psychological wounds. Also missing are James Webb's *Fields of Fire* and John del Vecchio's *13th Valley*. All of these are readily available and are highly recommended. My own experience suggests that younger officers will find these more relevant and insightful as well as more vivid and enjoyable than quaint accounts such as those of Siegfried Sassoon from World War I.

The Army experience of the last two decades has highlighted the importance of a moral vision to the commander. Colonel Nye takes a fresh look at the commander as moral arbiter and provides material that enables the student as well as the mentor to avoid the trite anecdotes of how lies on the battlefield caused unnecessary casualties and failed missions. Instead of the problem of how to develop character and teach right or wrong, the commander, according to Nye, is faced more often with the problem "of coaxing people of good character to act in accordance with their beliefs when operating in situations of great pressure and very little moral support." This is an invigorating perspective and reflects a growing awareness that the commander needs to establish conditions which favor the exercise of good character. While some may disagree, it is a point of view that should be known more widely and

debated. Nye provides a number of useful resources in addition to his own elaboration of this argument, which is clear and to the point. On a related topic, the commander's concept of duty, Colonel Nye focuses our attention on a subtle and potentially far-reaching shift in official Army statements on professional values such as FM 100-1, *The Army*. As a military profession, are we, in our more recent pronouncements, increasing the tensions between organizational imperatives and higher ethical principles, between personal integrity and the demands of duty? This is perhaps the most insightful observation on the contemporary professional scene in the entire book. It will be the subject of considerable discussion among those who read this guide to becoming a professional officer.

Despite the omission of a separate chapter on the commander as leader and the reliance on several hard-to-find works, Colonel Nye has given us a path by which to pursue becoming a professional while helping others along the way. Every battalion and brigade commander should have a copy and should use it regularly. The book should be well stocked in bookstores at service schools and on PX newsstands throughout the Army. It belongs in every professional's kit bag. When asked "What should I read?" would-be mentors could find no better answer than "Start with this" as they hand over their own well-worn, dog-eared, and carefully highlighted copies of *The Challenge of Command*.

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**The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898.** By Edward M. Coffman. 514 pages. Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, 1986. \$35.00.

Among the historians of the American military experience now teaching and writing, Edward M. Coffman is the dean of the social history of the US Army, and *The Old Army* is the definitive portrait of the 19th-century frontier Army. The book represents not only over ten years of Professor Coffman's own work, but the research of his many accomplished students from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. As a model of broad-ranging archival research and clear writing, the book is exceptional.

Professor Coffman wisely examines the peacetime Army in three distinct periods: the

period before the War of 1812, 1815-1861, and 1865-1898. In the latter two periods he divides his chapters into three broad topic areas: officers, women and children, and enlisted men. His description of Army life, based on a wide range of anecdotes and revealing statistics, shows the peculiar problems of planting and nurturing a hierarchical, disciplined military force on the chaotic Indian frontier. That the Army survived at all is testimony to the strength of the officer corps, the support of their families, and the dedication of a relative handful of sturdy noncommissioned officers. The frontier Army was not isolated from the major trends in American civil society; it might have been a larger, better-trained, and more stable force if it had, in fact, found the frontier more isolated. As Professor Coffman repeatedly drives home, the Army could not transcend the unmilitary, acquisitive, egalitarian values of American civic culture.

The author of two earlier books on General Peyton C. March and the American military experience in World War I, Professor Coffman knows the 19th-century Army as no other current historian does, but his research turned up few surprises. Nor does he attempt to construct an ideological profile of the officer corps like the one for the Navy in Peter Karsten's *The Naval Aristocracy* (1972). *The Old Army* is stronger on what soldiers did, individually and collectively, than on what they thought about what they did. In truth, not many officers (and certainly far fewer wives and troopers) took the time and interest to wax literary about their work. If they did, Professor Coffman probably found and used the extant collections. He also mined and analyzed the relevant data from the *Annual Reports of the Secretary of War*, a trove of statistical evidence on such matters as enlistments, ethnicity, medical conditions, desertions, and related personnel matters. He does deal with personnel policy questions as the Secretary of War and The Adjutant General saw them, but the focus is on comparing individual experiences and letting the soldiers speak for themselves.

*The Old Army* is an earnest, highly competent, and careful study of the Army in its frontier constabulary years. It shows that the problems of the 20th-century peacetime Army are not unlike those of its predecessor. Soldiers at Fort Knox and Fort Benning will quickly see that they share their problems with the ghosts at Fort Snelling and Fort D. A. Russell.

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**An International History of the Vietnam War: The Kennedy Strategy.** By R. B. Smith. 429 pages. St. Martin's Press, New York, 1986. \$25.00.

A singular phenomenon of Vietnam history writing to date is the enormous disparity between those historical accounts which deal with some specific, narrow slice of times and events and those designed to be broad, sweeping, and generalized. Of the first we have many good works, really first-rate accounts, of some specific aspect of the war. Of the second type, the comprehensive study, while we have several on hand, all of them are badly flawed one way or another.

I call this phenomenon the Tunnels of Cu Chi syndrome. A recently published book by that name exemplifies works of the first type. It is a graphic description of the Viet Cong's clever use of underground lairs, of underground warfare, and of the American "tunnel rats" who went down after them. As a history it cannot be faulted, save that it deals only with a most narrow subject. Dozens of books with the same characteristic have been produced in the past decade—informative, objective, accurate, but highly delimited in scope.

At the same time there has been a total lack of truly good general histories of the war which are detailed, meticulously researched, carefully written, and, most important of all, cover all sides of this multifaceted struggle: military, political, diplomatic, communicational, sociological, and psychological. The efforts to produce such broad-scale studies have scarcely been made by historians. Most have been the works of journalists, generals, or odd-minded amateur historians. These tend to produce somewhat distorted history, either because their authors lack the discipline and experience required of trained history writers or, in darker cases, because behind them lie motives other than the service of objective scholarship.

This has meant, for the past decade, that we who teach and supervise research or write on the Vietnam War have been able to accumulate a sizable library of specialized histories but not general works.

This prelude is by way of introduction to the fact that there is now some light at the end of the tunnel of Vietnam War history writing: the work under review here, which is the first truly serious history of the war—that is, of the scope, breadth of treatment, and sheer writing room required—to be produced.

R. B. Smith is a historian at the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London (and chairman of the Centre of Southeast

Asian Studies). He is the author of *Vietnam and the West*. Here he takes upon himself the herculean task of producing a full-scale study, which is to say four volumes, titled *An International History of the Vietnam War*, and for this if nothing else he is to be commended.

His first volume, *Revolution vs. Containment: 1955-61* traces events following the 1954 Geneva Conference that began to move Vietnam deeper and deeper into the quagmire, largely because of the conference's failure to settle anything about the country's future. The volume under review here, number two, begins in 1961 and ends with the US decision to intervene with ground troops. The last two volumes will take the war through to its conclusion in 1975.

*The Kennedy Strategy* consists of 20 chapters arranged into five parts. Part one deals with the early 1960s insurgency/counterinsurgency period: Hanoi's decision to begin armed *dau tranh* (struggle) strategy in the South; the reassertion of the validity of Mao Tse-tung's doctrine of people's war; the heady intellectual challenge these represented in Kennedy's White House circle. Part two treats the internal and disparate external events of 1962-63: the Cuban missile crisis, the leadership troika in Laos, Buddhist political moves in Saigon, and the context of the war in Southeast Asia. Part three deals with developments in Saigon (overthrow of Diem, chiefly) and Hanoi (doctrinal decision-making in terms of the Sino-Soviet dispute). Part four covers the crucial 1964 events in Laos, the Gulf of Tonkin incident, and diplomatic developments between the capitalist and socialist camps and within each. The final section is devoted to the respective decision-making processes in Hanoi and Washington in 1964 that cast the die of protracted conflict.

This book will strike American readers as having a distinctly European cast to it, understandably since Smith is a European and since he has deliberately set out to write the history of the war as part of the great river of world events during the period—that is the meaning of the term *International* in the title. This is a commendable approach since it avoids the parochialism that encases most Vietnam War accounts to date, particularly by Americans. Admittedly, at least for American readers, this approach tends to lend what might be regarded as a European character to the history, that is, ascribing to the struggle characteristics of 19th-century balance-of-power politics, or seeing higher correlation and neater relationships among world historical developments of the time than is actually justified.



However, every historian needs a cultural platform from which to view, and the one employed here does not impede the effort, it merely makes it sound occasionally unfamiliar.

Smith has thoroughly mastered his subject and obviously has researched the war carefully. He sets forth events in meticulously careful fashion. He draws conclusions firmly but not dogmatically, renders verdicts judiciously. For the most part the events of this period—their significance and their interpretation—are no longer the contentious matters they once were. For instance, at one time there raged a bitter argument as to the nature of the association, if any, between Hanoi and the National Liberation Front (or Viet Cong) in the South. Now this has sorted itself out and is no longer debated by serious historians. The same with the then murky posture of China with respect to the war, particularly in terms of doctrine—the meaning of “people’s war”—which has now become reasonably clear. Thus there is not the necessity here to deal with issues that have not yet sorted themselves out. Future volumes promise to be far more contentious.

One historical judgment of the period which does remain in doubt is the “What would Kennedy have done if he had lived?” argument. This is still a rather passionate issue on the American historical scene. The anti-Kennedy conservatives have argued that Kennedy engendered an excessive arrogance of power and put the United States into Vietnam, making his successor, Lyndon Johnson, a prisoner of policy, and that therefore Kennedy deserves primary blame for the subsequent outcome. Against them are the Camelot crowd, mostly individuals close to Kennedy, who churn out a steady stream of books and articles asserting that Kennedy at the time of his death had grown exceedingly wary of Vietnam as a quagmire and in fact was moving toward disengagement. Smith demonstrates the sterility of this dichotomy, neither being correct, and traces the complex truth of the matter through the middle ground.

*The Kennedy Strategy* is a fine contribution to our understanding of the Vietnam War, as was the first volume, *Resolution and Containment*, and as will be, I am confident, Smith’s final two volumes. I don’t mean to sound chauvinistic, but I can only conclude by saying it’s too bad an American couldn’t have written this admirable series. But perhaps that is the point—only a dispassionate outsider could have the necessary perspective.

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**The All-Volunteer Force After A Decade: Retrospect and Prospect.** Edited by William Bowen, Roger Little, and G. Thomas Sicilia. 352 pages. Pergamon-Brassey’s, Washington, D.C., 1986. \$32.50 (\$14.00 paper).

This collection of papers and brief commentary emerged from a conference held at the US Naval Academy in November 1983, cosponsored by the Economics Department and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Manpower, Reserve Affairs, and Logistics. It consists of five portions: a section on policy issues containing what appears to have been four lunch or dinner talks; a section entitled “Prelude and Performance to Date,” which discusses a number of narrower topics (e.g. the supply and quality of first-term enlistees); a valuable set of papers on technology and manpower; a section on manpower supply in the 1980s, which overlaps one of the previous sections; and a concluding section on alternate manpower policies. If this sounds like a hodge-podge, that is because the book is one, an ill-assorted and uneven compendium of scholarly papers, bureaucratic pep talks, and chaotic discussion summaries.

This should not be taken to slight the authors of the papers, many (though not all) of whom have something to say. Moreover, the serious student of manpower issues will find nuggets of information and, more rarely, insight in particular papers. Overall, however, this set of conference proceedings has all the vices of its kind and very few of the virtues. Additionally, given the perishable quality of many of the statistics and issues raised, it is unfortunate that it took three years to turn the undigested conference proceedings into a book.

It is true, however, that a comprehensive and coherent view of the manpower problem informs the entire book. The giveaway here is the remark of William Meckling in one of the “Commentary” sections of the book (p. 112): “I must echo the sentiments of my colleagues that it is nice to get together with people who were intimately involved with the work of the Gates Commission.” It was the Gates Commission, of course, which in 1970 provided the intellectual underpinnings of the All-Volunteer Force. Although its arguments may have served simply to justify a decision made on the basis of political expediency, those arguments have continued to influence the way we have analyzed military manpower problems a decade and a half later.

Free-market economists, led by Milton Friedman and Martin Anderson, among others,

dominated the Gates Commission, and their disciples are alive and well in *The All-Volunteer Force After A Decade*. What Charles Moskos has called the econometric approach to manpower problems dominates the book, and it is surely significant that the Economics Department of the Naval Academy sponsored this conference. This fact reflects a larger problem, namely that economists have set the terms of the volunteer force debate and continue to dominate it. With rare exceptions they short-change the historical, philosophical, and above all the strategic and military effectiveness aspects of manpower issues, concerning themselves instead with those elements of the manpower debate that are easily quantifiable.

Even one deeply suspicious of this approach (as this reviewer most certainly is) must record that the civilian and military bureaucrats charged with making the volunteer force work seem, on the evidence of this book, to find little fault with it—indeed, they exhibit in *The All-Volunteer Force After A Decade* a depressing facility with the jargon of the econometricians. There are a number of reasons for this, including the undeniable fact that Reagan Administration pay increases have restored the volunteer force to good health. Other elements, however, less reasonable and less attractive, are also at work. The American defense establishment has learned to live with the volunteer force and fears, subconsciously perhaps, the dislocations that a return to the draft would call forth: bureaucratic inertia, in other words, may call forth complacency. Moreover, having been told by successive administrations that the volunteer force does work because it must, some officials seem unwilling to discuss, let alone criticize, certain unpleasant, dangerous, or merely contentious realities of the volunteer force. These include its small size (about a half million men smaller than the pre-Vietnam armed forces), its extraordinary dependence on reserve forces, and such controversial issues as minority representation and the large-scale introduction of women.

It seems fairly clear that demographic and financial problems, if no others, will put the volunteer force in jeopardy in the 1990s. The response of the econometricians in *The All-Volunteer Force After A Decade* to the impending shortfalls in quality manpower includes some disquieting approaches, including that of suggesting that the military does not need intelligent soldiers for what they (the econometricians) consider mundane tasks—an approach

that contributed to the catastrophic falloff in the quality of the volunteer force in the late 1970s. Military and civilian officials who may feel comfortable with the jargon and assumptions of the economists should pay heed to this ominous line of argument; they may wish to consider whether that jargon and those assumptions will lead them in directions which they well understand to be pernicious.

Not all of the contributors to the volume adhered to the econometric view, to be sure. Two participants in particular, Charles Moskos and John Kester, make eloquent criticisms of the volunteer force, and of the assumptions of its proponents. Moskos's all-too-brief luncheon speech attacking the "market-place AVF" analyzes the pitfalls of the econometric approach, and of the dangerous consequences for the military of accepting the marketplace model. He wisely reminds us of the dangers of obsession with statistical indicators, remarking (p. 16) that "when the qualitative or 'anecdotal' reports came into conflict with the rosy picture of recruits given by the quantitative data of the 1970s, time proved it was the 'soft' rather than the 'hard' data that were the more accurate. A solid anecdote is to be trusted more than a slippery statistic." Kester's longer and more comprehensive attack on the volunteer force makes too many good points to be summarized here. He observes that "it is perplexing to try to understand how we adopted a system to man our armed forces which even its proponents admit will do us no good if we get into any serious conflict" (p. 292). He shows how, in a variety of ways, the volunteer force may well fail the test of a serious war. Whether or not one agrees with his final views, his paper should be read as much for the eminently sensible way he approaches the issues as for his conclusions.

Judging by what the editors of this book provide us, no one at this conference bothered to take seriously the remarks of either Moskos or Kester, preferring instead self-congratulation or arcane discussion of mathematical models for predicting first-term enlistment rates. This is a pity, since Moskos's and Kester's pungent and uncomfortable criticisms should make students of the volunteer force, and members of it, think more deeply about its advantages and drawbacks. If only to see what these two men have to say, it is worth looking at this book.

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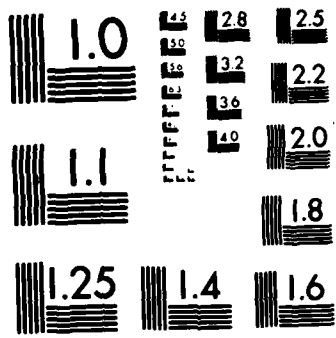
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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART

**The U.S. Navy: The View from the Mid-1980s.** Edited by James L. George. 385 pages. Westview Press, Boulder, Colo., 1985. \$19.85.

The stated purpose of the book is to look at important issues facing the US Navy today. From that generality the book offers a taste of US and Soviet naval strategy and a whole mouthful of naval force structure, addressing the problems and tradeoffs facing both strategists and programmers. In fact, much of the book assesses the issues at the heart of the Navy's force structure/procurement dilemma. The result of any military program always seems to be too much force structure for peacetime (that is, it is considered too expensive) and too little for war. And, when deterrence is the keystone of the strategy, there is no clear answer to the question of how much combat power is needed to back up our resolve.

This collection of some 30 thought pieces and commentaries deals directly with the pros and cons of the most important US Navy program issues. For instance, in part one, "The Naval Air Force," articles by Captain Alva M. Bowen and by Rear Admiral Douglas F. Mow separately address conventional sea-based aircraft and VTOL (vertical takeoff and landing) aircraft, providing the reader with an entertaining tug-of-war on the controversy over big aircraft carriers vs. small aircraft carriers. A wrong choice won't hurt us, we are reminded, unless there is a war.

Vice Admiral Robert J. Schoultz and C. E. Myers, Jr., comment on part one's several articles at the close of the section, providing reinforcement and further thought for the reader. The editor uses this scheme in introducing, discussing, and analyzing issues in each of the four parts of the book, which deal in turn with the naval air force, the surface force, the submarine force, and the theaters of operation. The first three parts serve as building blocks for the reader's understanding of force programming issues; the last part is an examination of naval warfare at the theater and strategic levels. The papers that deal with strategy and operations in a specific theater and globally are the high point of the book, especially the commentaries by Admiral Robert L. J. Long and Admiral Harry D. Train II, formerly Commanders-in-Chief of the Pacific Command and the Atlantic Command, respectively.

This book contains much of value to the military professional, non-Navy as well as Navy. It would be valuable to the senior service college student, providing a stimulating course of instruction on current naval themes, and it would be professionally rewarding as well for other students

of military strategy and senior members of the defense community.

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**Zones of Conflict: An Atlas of Future Wars.** By John Keegan and Andrew Wheatcroft. 158 pages. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1986. \$10.85.

John Keegan has been Senior Lecturer in War Studies at Sandhurst since 1960. He and Andrew Wheatcroft coauthored *World Armies* and *Who's Who in Military History*. Mr. Wheatcroft also has authored the *World Atlas of Revolutions*, clearly the precedent to this atlas.

Ignorance of such geographic fundamentals as distance, scale, and local topographic and meteorological conditions seems to be rampant among modern decision-makers. Certainly such ignorance played a role in the tragedy of the US rescue operation at Desert One in Iran. *Zones of Conflict* is an important step toward overcoming this weakness. It points out the importance of geography in all military operations. It does not overwhelm with detail, and it is general and readable enough to be interesting. This very asset will bother many professionals, who will bridle at its omissions and its simplification or ignorance of complex local realities. You can't and shouldn't try to be all things to all people. Get their attention first. Then they may actually be interested in such details as the common occurrence of winds in all deserts, the effects of blowing sand on highly sophisticated machinery and on visibility, the problems of actually deploying halfway around the world in a country that in fact is larger than an 8½- by 11-inch briefing map might imply.

*Zones of Conflict* is not the final word on the subject. It is a publicist's presentation of the topic. What it does is provide clear and attractive maps and easy-to-read synopses of the major geographic characteristics of key world regions where conflicts presently exist or where they are likely to occur.

While many maps illustrate "strategic corridors," a caveat would seem to be needed as to the omission of key air corridors or likely routes for air strikes. The atlas also would have benefited from the inclusion of a polar projection of the Northern Hemisphere. This would have illustrated geopolitical and military geographic realities of modern technology and provided a more accurate representation of the US-USSR face-off, especially the potential role of Spitsbergen (Svalbard)

in the Arctic Ocean. Another weakness is the lack of even a very general bibliography that could lead those interested into the literature. It would not have to have been comprehensive.

Important insights and points about the role and effects of various military terrains are found in the introduction. One hopes that these will not be ignored in favor of the more attractive maps and short regional or country descriptions. Some of these insights could have been integrated into the atlas. For example, world maps illustrating battle terrain or areas of likely war and areas in which wars are unlikely would have been most interesting and useful to policymakers.

Regardless of its technical faults, *Zones of Conflict* is an important addition to the growing awareness of the import of geography on both policy and actual conflict. It provides an excellent reference since, unlike a standard atlas, it contains brief, easily comprehended introductions to key world areas and their military geographies. Its only precedent is the work by E. A. Mower and M. Rajchman, *Global War: An Atlas of World Strategy*, published in 1942.

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#### Editorial Note:

Colonel William R. Calhoun, Jr., has completed his tour as *Parameters'* tenth editor and left Carlisle Barracks to become the Director of Personnel and Community Activities at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Colonel Calhoun's tenure as Editor was marked by ceaseless effort to improve the journal and by a dedicated sense of mission to further the education of Army War College graduates. Because of his personal encouragement, numerous authors entered print to speak to the point on matters vital to the Army and the nation. His editorial standard was perfection and his vision for *Parameters* was boundless. Colonel Calhoun's friendly demeanor and sense of humor were much appreciated by all who knew him and he will be sorely missed here on the banks of the Letort. The journal staff and his friends on the staff and faculty of the War College wish Colonel Bill Calhoun and his family Godspeed and the very best for the future.



## ... From the Archives

### THE GOOSE ON PICKET

Major General Victor J. Hugo's recent introduction of geese as early warning sentries for NATO air defense missile sites was not something new under the sun. Though General Hugo, Commander of the 32nd Army Air Defense Command, stated that his inspiration was the security practice of a present-day Scottish distillery, geese were in fact used as military sentries during the time of the Roman Empire, over 24 centuries ago. The Roman historian Livy provides the following account of Romans who, under attack by Gauls, sought refuge on Rome's Capitoline Hill:

The Gauls had noticed the tracks of a man, where the messenger from Veii had got through, or perhaps had observed for themselves that the cliff near the shrine of Carmentis afforded an easy ascent. So on a starlit night they first sent forward an unarmed man to try the way; then handing up their weapons when there was a steep place, and reached the summit, in such silence that not only the sentries but even the dogs—creatures easily troubled by noises in the night—were not aroused. But they could not elude the vigilance of the geese, which, being sacred to Juno, had, notwithstanding the dearth of provisions, not been killed. This was the salvation of them all; for the geese with their gabbling and clapping of their wings woke Marcus Manlius—consul of three years and a distinguished soldier—who, catching up his weapons and at the same time calling the rest to arms, strode past his bewildered comrades to a Gaul who had already got a foothold on the crest and dislodged him with a blow from the boss of his shield.

As he slipped and fell, he overturned those who were next to him, and the others in alarm let go their weapons and grasping the rocks to which they had been clinging, were slain by Manlius.

In his now shopworn quotation, George Santayana taught that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." But as General Hugo has shown, repeating the past is not necessarily bad and may be the path of enlightenment. And so far as the faithful fowls are concerned, they illustrate past doubt that you can teach a new goose old tricks.

Sources: *The Oxford Book of Military Anecdotes*. Edited by Max Hastings, p. 24; George Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, 1906.

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