Defining the Operational End State:

OPERATION DESERT STORM

A Monograph
By
Major Richard E. Matthews
Military Intelligence

School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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MAJOR RICHARD E. MATTHEWS

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School of Advanced Military Studies
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ABSTRACT

Defining the Operational End State: Operation Desert Storm, By Major Richard E. Matthews, 39 pages. This monograph examines what the author believes should be the critical first step in operational planning, defining and determining the end state. The operational end state is determined by an understanding of the strategic or political aim, and a linking of tactical engagements to achieve that aim. History has shown that America's armed forces have not always been committed in conflicts with clearly defined end states, and sometimes when it has, commanders on their own have deviated from the previously agreed upon end state. Too often there is a desire to become actively involved in a conflict without any idea for how things will be resolved. Having a clear end state is a vision for accomplishing the desired the ends.

The Persian Gulf War serves an example of the military success that can be achieved, if political leaders first, define the desired end state, and second, allowed military leaders the means and the flexibility to fight the battles to achieve the political goal.

Using a combination of theory, doctrine, and history, this paper seeks to establish that end states must be given more importance in our doctrine and planning. Military forces should not be committed unless leaders at every level -- strategic, operational, and tactical -- have articulated what is to be accomplished. When the end state has been carefully and clearly stated, American forces have proven they will give the full measure of devotion to that cause.

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Major Richard E. Matthews
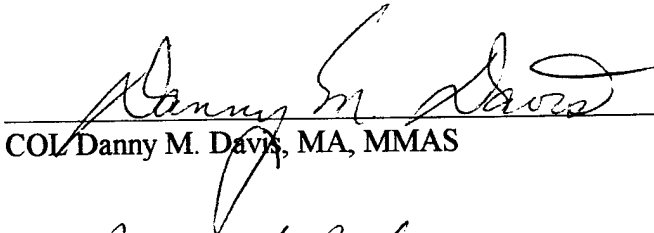
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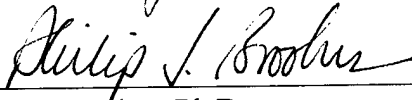
_____ Monograph Director
LTC Michael Combest, MMAS

_____ Director, School of
COL Danny M. Davis, MA, MMAS   Advanced Military
                                                    Studies

_____ Director, Graduate
Phillip J. Brookes, Ph.D.   Degree
Programs

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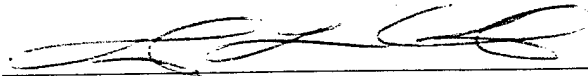
Where there is no vision the people perish.
Proverbs

In the beginning plan for the end. Although that seems like an obvious premise, it is easier said than done. In life and in war, success for a learning organization requires a vision by the leader of where he wants the organization to go, and that vision must be understood by all of its members. In war that vision is called the strategic aim; it must be found at the three levels of war -- strategic, operational, and tactical, and it must be understood by those fighting the operational and tactical battles. Unfortunately, becoming involved in conflict without a vision for the end happens; confirming that it is easier to get into a conflict than extricating oneself once involved. FM 100-5 Operations states succinctly, "When the nation commits its armed forces, it should clearly understand what military end state it wants to achieve."[1]

Although it may seem apparent, many commanders fail to understand the necessity to identify and convey a clear operational end state to their subordinates, or why that end state must drive all actions. When the end state is defined early and properly, it provides for unity of effort. Without a clear vision of the operational end state, planning and execution are wasted and ineffective. At the heart of the commander's vision of the end state is the most important principle of war: the objective.

One of the problems of American military involvement in war is the cessation of hostilities under favorable conditions. Too often, there is a desire to commit forces to conflict without a clear understanding of what we want the situation to be after the

conflict has ended. We need not look back too far to see examples of our failure to define the military end state. Korea and Vietnam serve as reminders of what can happen when American policy fails to identify an end state, or focus all efforts toward the strategic aim. Fred Ikle, in Every War Must End, confirms recent historical failure when he states "Many wars in this century have been started with only the most nebulous expectations regarding the outcome, on the strength of plans that paid little, if any attention to the ending. Many began inadvertently without any plans at all."[2] It is imperative that a vision of end state be carefully and clearly articulated before committing military forces to a theater of war.

Determining the end state is a critical first step in operational planning. Karl von Clausewitz notes 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."[3] Of course Clausewitz was referring to national leadership, but operational commanders at their level of war, also have a responsibility to the forces they command to not commit them without first being clear in their mind what they seek to achieve as the military end state. When the end state is not provided at the national level, the operational commander by default must establish the end state.

Using Operation DESERT STORM as a case study, this paper will examine the Persian Gulf War as another poignant reminder of why the military requires a clearly defined political end state and why military operations must be linked to the political end state.

Clausewitz, is most often quoted as saying "war is the continuation of policy by other means."[4] War in the purest sense results when policy has failed between two

nations. Diplomacy should place a priority to end wars before they start, or as in the case

of the Gulf War, it must create the most favorable conditions possible for war to begin and

end. If war is inevitable and if it is to be successful, military operations must be linked to

the strategic aim of policy. The linkage between political ends and tactical means is found

at the operational level in the operational end state. At this level the operational

commander must translate strategic goals as identified by the National Command

Authority (NCA) into attainable tactical goals.

Several terms require definitions to better understand the construct of this paper.

The operational level of war is the vital link between national and theater-strategic aims

and the tactical employment of forces on the battlefield.[5] *Operational art* is the

employment of military forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives within a

theater through the design, organization, integration, and conduct of theater strategies,

campaigns, major operations, and battles. Operational art translates the joint force

commander's strategy into operational design, and ultimately, tactical action, by

integrating the key activities at all levels of war.[6] Without operational art, war would be a

set of disconnected engagements, with relative attrition the only measure of success or

failure.[7] The end state is defined as a set of required conditions which, when achieved,

attain the aims set for the campaign or operation.[8]

There is no definition for operational end state. For the purpose of this study, the

working definition of operational end state is defined as the required military conditions

between the strategic and tactical levels that, when achieved, support the attainment of the

strategic objectives or pass the main effort to other instruments of national power to achieve the final strategic end state.[9]

The fundamental elements of end state are summed best in the military's capstone manual, Joint Publication 3.0 Doctrine for Joint Operations:

> "The desired end state should be clearly described by the NCA before Armed Forces of the United States are committed to an action. An end state is the set of required conditions that achieve the strategic objectives. There may be a preliminary end state--described by a set of military conditions-- when military force is no longer the principal means to the strategic aim... The term 'end state' simply represents the set of conditions necessary to resolve a crisis and transition from predominate use of the military instrument of national power to other instruments."[10]

A review of military doctrine from the Joint Electronic Library reveals the emphasis the services are now placing on the subject of end state. While joint doctrine defines and describes end state, the other service manuals only briefly delve into the importance of this subject. U.S. Navy doctrine is limited on the subject of end state. While the Joint Force Air Command (JFAC) manual mentions end state once, U.S. Air Force doctrine does not deal with the issue of end state in significant detail. FM 100-5 the Army's capstone manual, stresses the necessity for having a clearly defined end state in the greatest detail. "When the nation commits its armed forces, it should clearly understand what military end state it wants to achieve... That end state describes what the NCA wants the situation to be when operations conclude..."[11] The U.S. Marine Corps FMFM 1-1 Campaigning, is also limited in its approach to the subject with this exception, "Given the strategic aim as our destination, our next step is to determine the desired end state, the military conditions we must realize in order to reach that destination, those necessary conditions we expect by their existence will provide us our established aim."[12]   The

study of end state demands more than just isolated paragraphs, it should have its own chapter, and it ought to be the first chapter of every military manual. Every military operation, no matter the mission must be driven by the desired end state -- the outcome. Understanding the end state begins the plan to achieve the political goal.

THEORY

Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, and Henri Jomini each understood the relationship between strategy and tactics, and it is from their works that the theoretical framework for operational end state will be established. They agree that the decision to initiate war is political and must be made by political leaders. End state development then should be the responsibility of both politicians and operational commanders. In two places Sun Tzu discusses the role of politics, "It is said that enlightened rulers deliberate upon plans, and good generals execute them. . . and normally when the army is employed, a general first receives his commands from the sovereign. . ."[13]

Clausewitz is extensive in his approach to politics and war. He offers a ringing testimony of the connection between war and politics, "War is only a branch of political activity; that is in no sense autonomous . . . war cannot be divorced from political life; and whenever this occurs in our thinking about war, the many links that connect the two elements are destroyed and we are left with something pointless and devoid of sense."[14] Throughout On War, there is a consistent theme, that the purpose of the military is to serve some desired political end state. In Book One, Chapter One he devotes much time and attention to the subject:

"When whole communities go to war -- whole peoples, and especially civilized

peoples -- the reason lies in some political situation, and the occasion is always due to some political object. War, therefore, is an act of policy . . . Policy will permeate all military operations, and, in so far as their violent nature will admit, it will have a continuos influence on them . . . War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on with other means. The political object is the goal, war is the means of reaching it, and means can never be considered in isolation from its purpose."[15]

It is from Clausewitz that current U.S. military doctrine on the subject of operational end state is derived. "The strategist must therefore define an aim for the entire operational side of the war that will be in accordance with its purpose . . . he will draft the plan of war, and the aim will determine the series of actions intended to achieve it . . ."[16] The strategic aim represents the purpose for which military forces were committed, and Clausewitz intended the "series of actions" to be so linked together that it would lead to the operational end state. While he does not call this the operational end state, by analysis and synthesis, that is precisely what it is.

The tack taken by Jomini in his discussion of politics and its association with the military is more limited than that of Sun Tzu and Clausewitz. In the chapter titled "Military Policy" in his book The Art of War, he briefly describes two ideas, "prescribed aim and the system of operations," that are akin to establishing an operational end state. "When a war is decided upon, it becomes necessary to prepare . . . a system of operations in reference to a prescribed aim; to provide a base, as well as all the material means necessary to guarantee the success of the enterprise. . . the system of operations ought to be determined by the object of war . . ."[17] In short, Jomini is saying the system of operations links the operational end state -- "the prescribed aim" -- and strategic aim --

"the object of war" to tactical operations. Without operational art the strategic level of war could not be properly coordinated with the tactical level of war.

As previously discussed, the theorists, Sun Tzu, Clausewitz, and Jomini each see the necessity of using an "aim" to link strategy to tactics. This linkage is critical for obtaining the operational end state, since without it, tactics might not have the focus on the strategic aim that is guided by the desired policy that it is seeking to achieve.

A brief review of the Korean War, Vietnam, and finally the Persian Gulf War will show the impact of theory on history, and the impact of clearly defining and linking operational end states to strategic goals.

KOREA

President Harry Truman made a strategic decision to commit forces to Korea in June 1950 in an attempt to restore the Republic of Korea, following the surprise invasion by the North Korean Peoples Army. At the next level down -- the operational level -- General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, Commanding General of the Far East Command, in deciding which forces would be sent to Korea and what plan would be used to thwart the communist advance into South Korea was operating at the operational level of war. As the operational commander, it was MacArthur's responsibility to link military operations in the theater to the national goals of an independent South Korea.   The command and control structure in the Pacific and Far East was not designed in expectation of a major war in Asia. U.S. military strategy in the region was not focused on checking the expansion of communism in the Far East and Southeast Asia. At the macro level,

failure in Korea can be attributed to U.S. policy in the Far East, the absence of unity of command, the lack of coordination among intelligence gathering agencies, and the failure to remain focused on the stated strategic aim.

U.S. national policy was focused on containing the spread of Soviet communism around the world, but specifically in Europe; Korea had been excluded from the American defensive perimeter. In September 1947, President Harry Truman ordered an estimate of the importance of further military occupation in Korea from the point of military security to the United States.[18] Secretary of Defense James V. Forrestal responded that the troops and bases in Korea were of minor strategic value for American security. The Joint Chiefs of Staff reasoned that in the event of war American soldiers would be a liability since they could not be maintained without substantial reinforcements prior to an attack; any American offensive launched in Asia would bypass Korea, and air power could neutralize any threat. Air power was believed to be more feasible and less costly than ground forces.

> From the strategic viewpoint . . . Korea is of little strategic value to the United States and that any commitment to United States use of military force in Korea would be ill advised and impracticable in view of the potentialities of the over-all world situation and of our heavy international obligations as compared with our current military strength.[19]

In 1948 no threat appeared imminent and the Joint Chiefs recommended the evacuation of the 45,000 troops stationed in Korea, since they could be used more profitably elsewhere.

Prior to Korea gaining independence in 1948, the Korean Peninsula fell under the responsibility of Far East Command. Because Korea fell outside the purview of General MacArthur's General Headquarters (GHQ), his focus was not on that peninsula, but on defending east of Korea. As the Commander in Chief Far East (CINCFE) and the

Supreme Commander Allied Powers (SCAP), General MacArthur's primary responsibility was in the defense and occupation of Japan, not Korea. [20]

His specific missions were defense of the Ryukus and Japan, protection of air and sea lanes in the FEC, denial of Formosa to the enemy, support of the Pacific Command, the Alaskan Command, and the Strategic Air Command, assistance to the Republic of the Philippines in the defense of the islands, and providing safety for the U.S. personnel in Korea.[21] His area of responsibility ran through the chain of islands fringing the coast of Asia. It started at the Philippines and continued through the Ryukyu archipelago which included its broad main bastion, Okinawa. Then it bent back through Japan and the Aleutian Island chain back to Alaska.[22]

Although Korea was outside of the national strategy, an assessment by MacArthur from his strategic location, might have refocused part of the defense of Japan by assigning coningency forces to Korea. The Japanese had always been concerned about Korea, having seen it as a dagger threatening Japan. Historically, Korea had been a staging area for countries attacking the islands of Japan.

In response to the North Korean invasion, the Truman Administration allowed unrestricted use of U.S. ground forces in Korea beginning on 1 July 1950. In the previous five days, only air and naval forces had been introduced in Korea. MacArthur's command estimate on 29 June left him with the conclusion that only ground forces could save the Republic of Korea. Three months later, MacArthur's Inchon landing facilitated the Pusan breakout, and achieved the operational end state -- repelling North Korea back across the 38th Parallel. In war, as elsewhere, nothing succeeds like success. As a result of Inchon,

MacArthur's stock had climbed at the White House. Truman was more disposed to give MacArthur's military views greater weight. MacArthur was insistent that North Korea be invaded and was personally convinced that neither Russia nor China would intervene in Korea.[23]

While U.S. operational objectives had been met, Republic of Korea President, Dr. Syngman Rhee, had an agenda of his own, and he aspired for unification of Korea under his rule. While U.S. planners contemplated the destruction of the NKPA, Dr. Rhee was formulating plans for South Korean political aims. He had publicly stated his desire to unify Korea under his terms. U.S. ground forces fighting under MacArthur's command gave him the tool to achieve his aims. Washington had to confront this reality: Syngman Rhee had not the slightest intention of stopping his ROK Army at the 38th Parallel. He was hell-bent to unify Korea by force.[24]

U.S. operational goals were not linked to Dr. Rhee's political aims, and his political aims were not linked to U.S. strategic aims. Had the Truman administration and the United Nations elected to halt the war with the Republic of Korea restored, it might have sued for peace under favorable conditions. Instead, National Security Directive (NSD) 81/1, authorized U.N. forces to advance above the 38th parallel. A Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) directive dated 27 September 1950, also authorized U.S. ground forces to advance across the 38th parallel.

The directive was contingent upon: nonintervention of major Soviet or Chinese Communist forces into North Korea; no announcement of intervention; and no Soviet or Chinese military threats to counter MacArthur's operations in North Korea. The only

restriction in the JCS directive was a caution that non-ROK forces were not to be used in the provinces of North Korea bordering Manchuria. It set no limit of advance short of the Yalu River. MacArthur interpreted the restriction as an east-west line 45-50 miles south of the Korean-Chinese border. He did not seek specific guidance from the JCS, nor did the JCS question his interpretation.

On 24 October 1950, MacArthur removed all restrictions upon non-ROK forces clearing the way for a push to the Yalu River. In this instance the operational commander had taken it upon himself to change the end state without direction, guidance, or approval from the JCS.

> Clausewitz declares, "The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish . . . the kind of war on which they are embarking; neither mistaking it for, nor trying to turn it into, something that is alien to its nature. This is the first of all strategic questions and the most comprehensive."[25]

The next day, 25 October, Communist Chinese Forces (CCF) attacked U.N. forces to halt the northward advance. This was the fight that the Truman Administration had feared in the beginning. U.N. forces were not in North Korea to fight the Chinese, it was there to restore independence to South Korea, and to hopefully do it without resorting to nuclear war. The intervention of Chinese forces into the Korean War resulted from a clear misunderstanding between the use of armed force and a strategic aim.

To counter the CCF attack, MacArthur now went back to the JCS and requested permission to bomb bridges over the Yalu River. At first the JCS denied permission. It seemed that China was only protecting its interests and an other than military solution might be found; but neither the JCS nor the Truman Administration pursued this approach.

The next day, 8 November, the JCS acquiesced, believing the theater commander knew best. Hindsight proves that he did not.

The operational commander, MacArthur, had operated without national consent. In effect, his actions were establishing new policy for the U.N. and the U.S. While prudence advocated allowing this general the flexibility to fight battles, MacArthur's actions were a detriment to U.S. strategic aims.

The final U.N. offensive began 24 November 1950. In the next 24 hours the CCF would launch its own offensive, halt the U.S. advance, and ultimately push U.N. forces back past the 38th parallel. All of the previously gained territory was now loss, the U.S. was embarrassed and its foreign policy was suspect, and for his efforts, MacArthur would be relieved.

Today, we continue to live with the burden of MacArthur's decision to change the operational end state that had been approved. More than forty years later it is easy to cast blame, but that is not the purpose of this paper. After achieving the operational end state, it was changed by the decision of the theater commander. This was done without conferring with the NCA. Clausewitz' fundamental theory that war is the continuation of policy, manifests itself through the understanding and execution of an operational end state that supports the strategic aim. The operational success of the Inchon invasion and the Pusan breakout was voided by failing to stay focused on the end state.

MacArthur was adept at the operational use of force even without operational doctrine to guide him. It can be safely argued that he was a genius, but doctrine is designed to provide an alternative to the intuitive use of force.

In the absence of guidance, it is up to the operational commander to determine the best way to use his force. Working with little to no guidance, or ignoring what he did receive, MacArthur proceeded to design and implement the operational art that led to achievment of the operational end state. While he achieved operational success, MacAthur's action led to strategic failure.

VIETNAM

America's most glaring failure to establish a clearly defined military strategy and end state is Vietnam. Clausewitz' theoretical warning of the need to define an aim for the operational pursuit of war went unheeded by U.S. planners. Ikle states, "America's conduct of the war in Vietnam suffered not so much from limits imposed on the use of military force as from lack of overarching strategy for applying military force in a way that would bring the war to a satisfactory end."[26]

Before the U.S. became actively involved in Vietnam, it had already observed the failure of French political and military strategy. Unfortunately, in establishing its policy, the U.S. failed to learn from the French debacle. As early as 1950, France had requested U.S. assistance to defeat the communist backed Viet Minh. The official policy of the Eisenhower Administration was one of non-compliance with any requests for aid. General Matthew Ridgway, Army Chief of Staff, supported that policy and said, "Indochina is devoid of decisive military objectives and any U.S. involvement there would be a serious diversion of limited U.S. capabilities."[27] This was one of the few times in the Vietnam campaign that political and military leaders were in agreement. However, political leaders

abandoned this policy in favor of direct action. What kind of army, and what kind of

military would America have if it had not resorted to direct action in Vietnam?

The United States did not get involved in Vietnam blindly. At the request of the

French government, it began providing assistance in 1950 and then later to the South

Vietnamese government, with the goal of blocking Communist Vietnamese insurgent's

efforts to topple the Saigon government.[28] The French defeat in 1954 left the U.S. in

direct confrontation with the Vietnamese communists. The communists attack on South

Korea, and the growing Soviet menace in Europe made U.S. officials believe that it must

contain the spread of communism at all costs. Vietnam was another part of the strategy of

containment.

From 1954 until 1963 the U.S. supported the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem. This

support began with a few advisors and monetary aid to the sum of $100 million dollars.

By 1963 there were 15,000 advisors in country, and the U.S. was providing $500 million

dollars in aid. This support initially brought success to Diem's regime, and by 1956 90

percent of Viet Cong cells in the critical Mekong Delta had been destroyed.[29] Despite this

success Diem was not able to consolidate power throughout the Republic of Vietnam. In

Saigon he was able to establish some semblance of authority and control, but power lies in

the people, and in the country he was powerless. Excesses and insensitivity by Diem's

government led to a Viet Cong resurgence by 1960. Diem's failure to reform and the

alienation of the South Vietnamese people set the conditions for a coup that led to Diem's

murder.

Following Diem's coup, the Republic of Vietnam became a revolving door of

successive coup attempts, and the increased "Americanization" of the Vietnam War. On 2

August 1964, the destroyer USS Maddox was attacked by a North Vietnamese patrol boat

in the Tonkin Gulf, off the coast of Vietnam. Two days later the USS Maddox was

attacked again, and on 4 August, President Lyndon Johnson authorized U.S. aircraft to

attack North Vietnamese patrol boat bases in retaliation. This served only to heighten

U.S. involvement in Vietnam, as U.S. planes retaliated by bombing targets in North

Vietnam. "The U.S. Congress passed, with near unanimity, the Tonkin Gulf Resolution,

granting the president great latitude in fashioning a military response to the conflict in

Southeast Asia. The resolution authorized the president to take all necessary measures to

repel any armed attack against the forces of the United States and to prevent further

aggression."[30] With this latitude, President Johnson ordered Marines to Vietnam on 18

March 1965. The introduction of U.S. combat troops marked the end of what had been

the advisory effort in support of a Vietnamese solution to the conflict with North Vietnam.

The Johnson administration and military planners now began in earnest at developing a

military solution to the Vietnam problem.

Hindsight has shown that a military solution did not lead to the desired end state.

At the root of the problem was a failure to link strategic aims with tactical engagements.

At the macro level, failure may be attributed directly to national leaders. The president

failed to apply diplomacy or economic sanctions, and he underestimated the resolve of Ho

Chi Minh. Having discarded diplomacy, he narrowed his choices to only one option --

war. He was not blind to the tragedy, but he closed his eyes to the possibility of other

alternatives, and seemed to have persuaded himself that his plight was inevitable.[31]

> Johnson began by exerting gradual pressure on North Vietnam, though he was
> uncertain the strategy would work . . . he perceived that additional manpower,
> money, and material might be necessary. So he entered the war fully aware of
> the dangers ahead. He eventually failed because he misjudged the enemy's
> capacity to withstand pain, believing there was a threshold to their endurance.
> But, as Ho Chi Minh had warned the French, the Vietnamese Communists
> would risk annihilation rather than capitulate.[32]

National objectives were never clearly defined, and military leaders at every level failed to

understand they were fighting an insurgency during its phase 2 period -- guerrilla warfare -

- and traditional Army doctrine was focused on conventional warfare. Former JCS

Chairman, and Ambassador to Vietnam from 1964-1965 General Maxwell Taylor stated

that the U.S. was not trying to defeat the North Vietnamese but wanted to cause them to

mend their ways. He did recite the domino theory: "If we leave Vietnam with our tail

between our legs, the consequences of this defeat in the rest of Asia, Africa, and Latin

America would be disastrous."[33]

Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara, described the national objective as, "We

seek an independent, non-Communist South Vietnam."[34] General William Westmoreland,

Commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), translated this

political objective into the following strategic objective: "To assist the Government of

Vietnam and its armed forces to defeat externally directed and supported communist

subversion and aggression and attain an independent South Vietnam functioning in a

secure environment."[35] The only problem with this aim was which "Government of

Vietnam?" With the number of coups in the country, one thing that could not be certain

was who was actually in charge in South Vietnam. This also affected internal and

international legitimacy.

Not only were there changes in the South Vietnam government, but there were

also changes in U.S. military strategy concerning the Vietnam War. U.S. strategy evolved

from providing advisors and assistance, to small unit counterinsurgency operations, to

conventional warfare, to pacification. The intent of these military operations was to

isolate South Vietnam, stabilize the government, and defeat the insurgency. However the

military options failed. U.S. focus was on the enemy within, instead of the real threat

which came from without. Harry Summers, in describing the military failure in Vietnam

in his book, On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War said, "Instead of

focusing our attention on the external enemy, North Vietnam - the source of the war - we

turned our attention to the symptom - the guerrilla war in the south - and limited our

attacks in the north to air and sea actions only."[36]

Ultimately, led to the adoption of attrition.

> "In a sense, simple attrition of insurgent forces and support systems was a natural
> strategy for MACV to pursue. It emphasized the Army's strong suits in firepower
> and strategic mobility and offered the prospect of minimizing U.S. casualties. The
> Army, being denied the opportunity to win a decisive battle of annihilation by
> invading North Vietnam, found the attrition strategy best fit the kind of war it had
> prepared to fight. A strategy of attrition offered the Army the prospect of winning
> the war quickly, or at least more quickly than with traditional counterinsurgency
> operations, which promised to be long and drawn out. Attrition is a product of the
> American way of war: spend lavishly on munitions, material, and technology to
> save lives."[37]

General David R. Palmer said, "attrition is not a strategy. It is irrefutable proof of

the absence of any strategy."[38] The absence of strategy bares itself in the rise and fall of

U.S. force levels between 1964 and 1971. By December 1965 U.S. forces totaled

200,000. Less than three years later the numbers had climbed to more than 500,000, with General Westmoreland requesting an additional 206,000 soldiers. His troop requests indicate that he may have been just as interested in using soldiers as he was in using munitions and technology.

With the election of President Richard Nixon in 1968 and his promise to end the war, U.S. forces began to withdraw as President Nixon sought to Vietnamize the war -- to give the South Vietnamese the responsibility of fighting its own war.

The inability of the military to link tactical means to strategic ends finally resulted in a humiliating loss for U.S. military forces and American prestige worldwide. Although the U.S. never lost a tactical battle, in the end, they did not win the war. At the core of the problem was U.S. failure to understand the theoretical concepts of war and politics, and the failure to clearly define or develop an operational end state that supported the strategic aim. Unlike Korea's MacArthur, no commander in Vietnam emerged with the genius to understand or link strategic aims to tactical successes. The lack of a dominant personality and the absence of operational doctrine made it difficult to determine an operational end state.

THE GULF WAR

At the strategic level, the Persian Gulf War provides a useful model of what can happen when well defined political objectives are translated into military strategy. In contrast to U.S. involvement in Korea and Vietnam, U.S. national objectives had been previously stated. In 1980, in what became known as the "Carter Doctrine," President

Jimmy Carter identified the Persian Gulf as an area of vital interest. "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf Region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America. Such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."[39] The Carter Doctrine has continued and serves as the foundation for current national strategy concerning the Persian Gulf region.

In August 1990, President George Bush addressed the nation after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraqi forces. He stated U.S. national policy objectives in the Persian Gulf as: "Four simple principles guide our policy; we seek immediate, complete, and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait; Second, restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government to replace the puppet regime; Third, security and stability of Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf; and Fourth, safety and protection of the lives of American citizens abroad."[40]

Strategy does not achieve ends, forces do, and President Bush knew the sacrifice involved in committing forces to achieve that strategy. "The most serious responsibility that any president faces is the decision to send troops to an area of hostility, to commit someone else's son or daughter to go into battle."[41] The president further stated that he used a three point formula every time American forces were committed into harms way. The first criterion was to define the mission. The second was tasking the military and the Secretary of Defense with determining whether the mission could be accomplished; and the third was when would the troops come home, what would be the exit strategy.[42]

American strategy in the Middle East has long included stability as one of its key goals.[43] Instability in the region was geared primarily to maintaining the free flow of oil.

Any threat to that oil supply, seriously impacts the world economy. A variety of U.S. actions in the late 1970s and the 1980s attempted to support this strategy, the formation of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force, and the creation of Central Command (CENTCOM). CENTCOM had geographic responsibility for United States military operations in most of the Middle East and Southwest Asia. CENTCOM has no forces assigned to it. It consists of only a joint planning headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. If CENTCOM went to war, it would have to "borrow" forces earmarked for Middle East contingencies but actually under other geographic commands.[44] Following the attack by Iraq, United States vital interests were threatened. Now the issue was how to restore stability to the region.

At the time of the Iraqi attack, CENTCOM's operational plans had been oriented on repelling an attack by the Soviet Union into Iran. General Schwarzkopf was in the process of revising his plans toward a more regional threat, but a plan had not been completed, and there was no approved off-the-shelf plans for an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. CENTCOM immediately began developing courses of action to prevent Iraq from continuing the invasion into Saudi Arabia. However, their initial plans did not have an operational link to U.S. strategic goals. The immediate threat was defending Saudi Arabia and preventing continued aggression by Iraq. That alone could not restore stability to the Persian Gulf region, what was required was the complete withdrawal from Kuwait by all Iraqi forces.

Because national objectives had been defined so clearly, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander-in-Chief Central Command (CINCCENT) and his staff were

able to transform the national objectives into clear operational end states. CENTCOM defined its objectives into two policy goals, restoration of the legitimate government of Kuwait and regional stability.[45] Accomplishing these end states required the withdrawal of the Iraqi Army by either negotiation or military force.

The State Department attempted to resolve the conflict through "shuttle diplomacy" with Secretary of State James Baker as the principle agent. Simultaneously, CENTCOM designed a two phased military strategy to accomplish the nations goals if force was required. The first phase was an air campaign that targeted Iraqi command, control, and communications, air defenses, the cutting off of supplies and reinforcements, and attacking Iraqi ground forces. The second phase was a ground campaign designed to attack ground forces that were in defensive positions in Kuwait.

The Persian Gulf War was oriented first on the defense, named Operation DESERT SHIELD, and later on offense, named Operation DESERT STORM.

> U.S. military objectives during Operation DESERT SHIELD were to develop a defensive capability in the Gulf region to deter Saddam Hussein from further attacks; Defend Saudi Arabia effectively if deterrence failed; Build a militarily effective Coalition and integrate Coalition forces into operational plans; and, finally, enforce the economic sanctions prescribed by United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 661 and 665. These objectives provided planning staffs with the necessary direction to develop options and concepts.[46]

The purpose of Desert Shield was to allow the U.S. and its allies time to deploy enough forces and material into the theater. Once the buildup of forces was completed, the focus of the campaign turned from defensive operations to offensive.

On 14 November 1990, General Schwarzkopf met with his senior commanders in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia to state his operational goals. His goals were taken from the

strategic goals outlined by the president. Unlike Vietnam, the president was clear in how

he wanted war in the Middle East to be conducted, and he left it to the military leaders to

plan and conduct the effort. Another aspect of the Bush Doctrine states, "let the civilians

and the president do the diplomacy, do the politics, wrestle with the peers, once the lead

up to the fighting has begun, let the politicians get out of the way and let the military fight

the war, and let them fight to win."[47]

Armed with this guidance, General Schwarzkopf set about to establish specific

goals for the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations (KTO). His commanders intent stated,

maximize friendly strength against Iraqi weakness and terminate offensive operations with

the Republican Guard Forces Command (RFGC) destroyed and major U.S. forces

controlling critical lines of communications (LOCs) in the Kuwaiti Theater of

Operations.[48] In plain language he said:

> "The first thing that we are going to have to do is, I don't like to use the word
> 'decapitate,' so I think I'll use the word 'attack,' leadership, and go after his
> command and control. Number two, we've got to gain and maintain air superiority.
> Number three, we need to cut totally his supply lines. We also need to destroy his
> chemical, biological, and nuclear capability. And finally . . . We need to destroy not
> attack, not damage, not surround -- I want you to destroy the Republican Guard.
> When you're done with them, I don't want them to be an effective fighting force
> anymore. I don't want them to exist as a military organization.[49]

To accomplish its operational goals, CENTCOM planners designed an offensive

campaign that would begin with strategic bombing first; then gaining control of the

Kuwaiti skies; then bombing Iraqi artillery positions, trench lines, and troops; and finally

culminating with a ground offensive to fix, cutoff, and destroy Iraqi armor.[50] In addition

to stated U.S. national goals, Central Command planners assumed as implied objectives

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the destruction of an Iraqi offensive capability and a consequent restoration of a regional balance of military power.

> In order to achieve assigned goals quickly and with minimum Coalition casualties, U.S. defense planners applied the principle of decisive force. This contrasted with the incremental, attrition warfare which had characterized U.S. operations in Vietnam. When U.S. forces were committed to combat in Southwest Asia, planners were able to exploit every possible advantage in tactics, equipment, command and control, and forces deployed to the theater at maximum speed. The Coalition used operations throughout the KTO and Iraq, rather than attacking centers of gravity and other crucial objectives piecemeal.[51]

While General Schwarzkopf focused on the operational level of war, former JCS Chairman, General Colin Powell, in describing the strategy for attacking the Iraqi Army before a national audience said, "First we are going to cut it off, and then we are going to kill it."[52] His comments were two-fold; to inform the public of the military strategy and to send a stern message to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Through all of this there remained a consistent cord of communication between strategic and operational goals, that was further linked to what the tactical commanders would seek to accomplish at their level.

Unlike Korea and Vietnam, the goals of the Persian Gulf War were carefully planned and specified, not only to the military leaders who would fight the battles, but to the American public who provided the legitimacy for American involvement. Legitimacy was provided to both, because military leaders could fight the war successfully as long as it kept a sharp eye on the strategic end state.

The subsequent military campaign, Operation DESERT STORM saw the overwhelming use of coalition air and ground forces achieve the first of President Bush's

strategic goals, "the complete and unconditional withdrawal off all Iraqi forces." What politicians failed to achieve through negotiations, military forces achieved after a 44 day joint and combined campaign of destructive combat.

One of the drawbacks of the campaign with the greatest potential for problems was the consumption by Schwarzkopf with the destruction of the Iraqi Republican Guard, almost to the detriment of forgetting the strategic aim. Schwarzkopf stressed the importance of demolishing the Republican Guard. He personally dictated the mission of his main ground attack force: "attack deep to destroy Republican Guard armored-mechanized forces."[53] The Republican Guard was Saddam Hussein's elite force that had been created by the Iraqi leader toward the end of the war against Iran. They were responsible for reversing the Iranian tide of victory during their bloody eight year war. They were well paid, better fed, better trained, and more loyal than the regular troops. They were said to be extraordinary fighters.[54]

Schwarzkopf's attention to the Republican Guard was not without merit. He knew that the key to evicting Iraqi forces from Kuwait, hinged on keeping the operational reserve (Republican Guard) from influencing the close battle. VII Corps, commanded by Lieutenant General Fred Franks, was given the mission of destroying the Republican Guard. Franks was a methodical, deliberate commander who had trained his corps to synchronize its every movement to maximize its combat power in a defensive battle against a larger foe.

In the fashion of Heinz Guderian, the successful World War II German panzer general, Franks intended to attack the Iraqis with a three division fist, not piecemeal.[55]

With this approach he sought to shatter and shock the Iraqis into submission. In retrospect, Franks has been criticized for being too cautious and deliberate, and not effectively using the speed and firepower of his armored corps.

The VII Corps was ordered on 25 February 1991 to destroy the Republican Guard forces not later than nautical twilight on the evening of February 27. Without the benefit of a current intelligence estimate, Franks and his staff developed an operations order to achieve the destruction of the Republican Department, but through the first days of the ground war, he never closed on the Republican Guard to accomplish that mission.

Forty-six hours into the campaign the CENTCOM war room received comments that Iraqi forces were withdrawing from Kuwait. This prompted a call from General Powell that such actions could very quickly lead to a cease-fire.[56] Unexpected success had now given way to two more problems; fratricide against coalition forces and the belief by air force pilots that the destruction of Iraqi forces on the road to Basra had turned into indiscriminate killing. These factors helped influence the NCA to request the cease-fire. Unlike Vietnam, the president did not give orders nor did he second guess the decisions of the military commanders. He simply left the decision to the combat commanders.

On 27 February 1991, Powell called again to inform Schwarzkopf that the president was on the verge of ending the war after five days. He stated that Washington and some of the coalition partners were becoming uncomfortable over wanton killing.[57] The strategic aim of evicting the Iraqis from Kuwait had been met, and Schwarzkopf had earlier briefed the success and victory of Operation DESERT STORM. In recommending an end to the war, Powell was motivated by considerations that went beyond military

concerns. Determined that the military would erase the stain of Vietnam and come out of the Gulf War victorious with its honor intact, the JCS chairman wanted to avoid the impression that the United States was killing Iraqis fro the sake of killing them. If that meant erring on the side of caution, Powell was prepared to live with that.[58]

For months Schwarzkopf had insisted to his subordinate commanders and to the NCA that the overriding goal of the coalition was the destruction of the Republican Guard. Now, the Republican Guard was not destroyed. The closer one got to the battlefield, the more questionable the decision to end the war. The operational end state had not been achieved.

In briefing the American commanders back in October, Schwarzkopf had left no ambiguity about the Army's mission. The Republican Guard were not to be routed, they were not to be made "combat ineffective." They were to be destroyed. Yet after six months of planning, the coalition ground offensive never reached its logical culmination. Neither the ground offensive nor the bombing fully destroyed the Iraqi field forces.[59]

[Major General Barry] McCaffrey, commander of the 24th Infantry Division and his key commanders never thought the entire Republican Guard had been destroyed . . . the commanders who knew most about the battlefield were not asked their views.[60] Is there a responsibility by the tactical commander to inform, remind, or tell the operational commander that the end state has not been achieved? Certainly, since the levels of war are as hierarchical as they are integrated, the operational commander should have heeded the advice of his tactical commanders. However, the operational commander must not follow

his commanders blindly, he must not allow tactical victories to influence his responsibility to the strategic aim.

In this instance Schwarzkopf could have responded as MacArthur had forty years previously and allowed his operational concerns to override the established strategic aims. Additionally, he had the uncompromising support of his subordinate commanders. Had he ordered his ground forces across the Euphrates River into Iraq they would have gone without hesitation. Had he continued to pursue and attack the retreating Republican Guard, he would have fallen into MacArthur's trap. No, the Chinese were not coming this time to rescue Iraq, but the political damage might have been equally irretrievable.

He might have insisted to the NCA that the destruction of the enemy was too close to turn back now. The president and his staff might have allowed him to follow his instinct and continued to attack. It did not happen because they did not lose focus of the previously stated strategic aim. There was constant communication between CINCCENT, the CJCS, and the Secretary of Defense. Their efforts at the strategic and operational level prevented the tactical triumph of DESERT STORM from turning into a tragedy.

One of the important lessons of the Persian Gulf War was that the operational commander did not allow his concerns for accomplishing his stated operational end state - - the destruction of the Republican Guard -- interfere or cloud his judgment. "Now that the Iraqis were being routed, Schwarzkopf was prepared to subordinate the final destruction of the Republican Guard to the administration's political goals."[61] The operational end state must be subordinated to the greater strategic goal. To Schwarzkopf's credit he did not lose sight of this. He was the operational link between

the tactical fighting and the strategic aim, and he understood his role was to support the strategic aim.

After the president announced the war was over, the next issue for military planners was planning for the conduct of the cease-fire talks. The purpose of the talks with the Iraqis was to establish the conditions for ending the war. The political leaders did not provide any written conditions, and the responsibility fell upon Schwarzkopf. Because war is the continuation of policy, the responsibility should not have been left to the operational commander, it should have rested with the State Department and the president. "The untidy end to the conflict showed that it is not enough to plan a war. Civilian and military officials must also plan for the peace that follows."[62]

Without written instructions Schwarzkopf began the difficult task of preparing the terms for ending the war.

> Two days before, Powell had asked us to draft a set of military conditions that Iraq would have to meet for the cease-fire to become permanent. . . Number one was the immediate release of all coalition prisoners of war, as well as a complete exchange of information on troops listed on missing in action and the return of any remains. . . there was no way I wanted a repetition of the POW and MIA agony of the Vietnam War. Next I'd spelled out the measures necessary to make the battle zone safe. . . the Iraqis had to tell us where they'd planted mines and booby traps in Kuwait, as well as indicate any storage site they'd established for chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons.[63]

Prior to beginning the offensive, political and military planners should have already planned for both the success and potential failure of Operation DESERT STORM. It is not conciliatory to say the war ended to soon, one hundred hours, and there was not enough time to plan. Planning for the end state -- the end game -- must begin immediately, since the end state and what is to be accomplished drives the operation.

CONCLUSIONS

Successful warfare at the operational level requires that tactical actions support the attainment of the strategic aim. Stated another way, the effective use of operational art focuses on arriving at an end state that achieves the national objectives in times of conflict. The study of theory and history shows that doctrine must be a cornerstone of the study of operational end state. If end states are as important as this paper has established, end state should receive greater emphasis in the joint and service capstone manuals.

The 1993 revision of FM 100-5 made a clear attempt to improve the understanding of this subject, and subsequent versions must continue to place due emphasis on the importance of having a clearly defined end state. Taken in isolation, the end state should meet the conditions of feasibility, acceptability, and suitability (FAS Test), just as the overall plan considers the FAS test.

Further doctrinal guidance is required to address the issue of end state. Both Army and Joint Doctrine pose a series of questions for the military commander that, when answered, will allow military planners to focus on the strategic objectives in a theater of operations. These questions include:

- What military conditions will achieve the strategic objective in the theater of war or theater of operations?

- What sequence of actions is most likely to produce these conditions?

- How should the commander apply military resources within established limitations to accomplish that sequence of actions?

- What is the likely cost or risk to the joint forces in performing that sequence of actions?[64]

Armed with the above set of doctrinal questions, military planners have a frame of reference to at least begin planning.

There was no such doctrinal framework for planning during the Korean War. Initial success came from the genius of MacArthur. However great his military mind, he still succumbed to losing perspective of the strategic aim. One can only imagine how Korean history might be today had he remained committed to the greater strategic goal. Instead, MacArthur and the president allowed tactical success to blind them to strategic reality. They changed the end state and today we live with a fragile armistice. Initially, America had entered the Korea War with the aim of evicting the NKPA from South Korea and restoring the status quo ante bellum. By the time of Inchon President Truman had made the decision to enlarge the war. American forces would cross the 38th Parallel, wipe out whatever was left of the NKPA, depose the Communist regime of Kim Il Sung, and unify Korea under a single, popularly elected government.[65] MacArthur could not have reminded the president of the success of the previously stated strategic aim, because like the president he wanted to continue to pursue the NKPA. War is the continuation of policy, but success unfortunately caused the policy makers to change their policy.

If Korea was an example of changing policy, Vietnam was an example of no policy. A strategic aim for the conduct of the Vietnam War was never articulated to the operational commanders. In a conflict where historians on both sides agree that American backed forces of the Republic of South Vietnam never lost a tactical battle, yet they still lost the war. The reasons for defeat begin with the failure to link the strategic to the tactical by an operational end state.

The Persian Gulf War was not fought absolutely perfectly, but the mistakes of Korea and Vietnam were not repeated. The operational commander did not allow his operational end state to interfere with the strategic end state. He was willing to subordinate his previously stated goals after the strategic aim had been met. What allowed him to do this was clearly defined strategic guidance and his ability to link that guidance with tactical engagements on the battlefield.

CENTCOM planners sought answers that they hoped would lead to the defeat of the Iraqi Army and the eviction of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. At the operational level they believed that the destruction of the Republican Guard would achieve the desired strategic objective of unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait, allowing for restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government, and security and stability for Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. Actions were sequenced by a coordinated joint air and ground campaign involving all services that massed the effects of combat power. Through the wargaming process and course of action development, an assessment was made and the plan was implemented.

History and theory have further demonstrated that an operational level of war is needed to link strategic aims to tactical means. Civilian leaders must articulate the political aims and allow military leaders the flexibility to translate those aims into achievable end states. Military leaders have a responsibility to not lose focus of the political aim as they plan and execute the operational level of war. While military leaders are driven to success on the battlefield, military success must be inextricably bound to the national objectives. The identification of an operational end state serves as the basis for

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the operation, determines required resources, and measures success. Without a clearly defined end state, the resources of men, material, and time are wasted. Korea and Vietnam demonstrated what happens when an end state is not clearly defined or changed, while the Gulf War serves as model for correct use of operational end states, and not wavering from the assigned political goal.

Understanding the operational end state provides the focus for achieving tactical objectives. Through doctrine combat commanders must become well versed in analyzing strategic goals and they must understand their responsibility to develop a vision for a military end state necessary to achieve the strategic goal. Military leaders must ask for a clear statement of the strategic aim. They are not suppose to be the policy makers, but the molders of policy. Sometimes it takes military force or the threat of force for adversaries to understand how the military molds policy.

When a strategic aim is not provided, the military leader turned statesman must exercise the chain of command to have them articulate an end state. If necessary he may even have to demand it. Should it still not be provided, the commander may provide suggestions for a proposed end state. Military forces, material, and other resources must not be committed without an end state.

The end state serves as the foundation of the commander's intent, "a concise expression of the **purpose** of an operation, a description of the desired end state . . . it must be understood two echelons below the issuing commander. It is the single unifying focus for all subordinate elements . . . in order to achieve success."[66]

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History and theory suggest that the presence of an operational end state is so critical to the proper conduct of the operational level of war, that the military leader is duty bound to provide one. Following the cessation of hostilities in the Gulf War, Schwarzkopf did just this. He established what he thought should be the conditions for ending the war, and forwarded if to the NCA for comment and approval. Success depends on a vision, a purpose for where the leader wants his organization to go. When properly nested at the three levels of war, it prevents turning victory into defeat as in Korea, and it allows operational commanders to fight unimpeded unlike Vietnam. In the Persian Gulf War we finally got some things right.

ENDNOTES

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