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Cover Photo: Iranian women light candles in Mother Square in Tehran, 18 September 2001, in memory of victims of the terrorist attacks on the U.S. (AP Photo/Hasan Sarbakhshin)



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A CAUSE FOR HOPE

Economic Revitalization in Iraq

**Paul Brinkley,
Deputy Under
Secretary of Defense
for Business
Transformation**

I need not tell you that the world situation is very serious. That must be apparent to all intelligent people. I think one difficulty is that the problem is one of such enormous complexity that the very mass of facts presented to the public by press and radio make it exceedingly difficult for the man in the street to reach a clear appraisal of the situation. Furthermore, the people of this country are distant from the troubled areas of the earth and it is hard for them to comprehend the plight and consequent reactions of the long-suffering peoples, and the effect of those reactions on their governments in connection with our efforts to promote peace in the world.

—George C. Marshall

Paul A. Brinkley is Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Business Transformation. In June 2006, he was tasked by the deputy secretary of defense to lead the Task Force for Business and Stabilization Operations, Iraq. Mr. Brinkley holds bachelor's and master's degrees in industrial engineering from Texas A&M University and has completed coursework for a Ph.D. in operations research from North Carolina State University. The holder of four U.S. patents for systems and process technologies, he was a senior executive with several successful international companies prior to joining the Department of Defense in 2004.

THESE WORDS, spoken before the commencement of Harvard graduates in June of 1947, captured the distress of postwar Europe and the challenge of helping the average American comprehend the import of events of the day. Wary of sacrifice after four years of global war and motivated to focus on domestic prosperity, most Americans in 1947 were unmoved by appeals to assist in new international challenges.

George C. Marshall and his fellow statesmen recognized the absolute necessity of restoring economic vitality to stabilize postwar Europe and stop the further spread of Soviet communism. Similarly, the U.S. recognized the need for economic reconstruction and development in Iraq following the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003. That recognition of need, however, is where similarities end between the two eras and their respective reconstruction efforts. The Marshall Plan focused intently on revitalization of industry, restoring factory capacity and associated employment, wealth generation, and intracontinental trade among nations that had recently been at war with one another. It required European leaders to define their own economic and industrial revitalization plans, promising massive amounts of U.S. financial assistance in return for progress in economic restructuring and integration. This

PHOTO: Women working in a ready-to-wear factory in Najaf, Iraq (photo courtesy of the author).

approach facilitated the reestablishment of effective government in war-torn, demoralized nations and laid the groundwork for the future economic integration of Europe now embodied in the European Union.

In contrast, Iraqi reconstruction has primarily consisted of U.S.-financed and U.S.-managed construction programs to rebuild damaged basic infrastructure. Financial incentives to encourage political and economic development have not been part of the strategy for reconstruction.

The differences in the effects of these approaches are stark. Iraq today faces ongoing sectarian violence and an insurgency that threatens the elected government. This continuing violence is in no small part a result of economic distress. Our armed forces face an increasingly difficult situation—attempting to secure areas that, four years after the hope and promise of liberation, lack any improvement in economic fortunes. The nonmilitary arm of the U.S. Government has yet to fully support our armed forces with effective economic engagement so that security, once established, can be sustained.

Today in Iraq, we confront challenges and opportunities similar to those faced by Marshall. We have the imperative opportunity to invest additional American effort, creativity, and treasure to uplift the economic fortunes of ordinary Iraqis—not by building things for them, but by re-enabling them to build for themselves. To understand this opportunity, we have to grasp what has already occurred and then confront inaccurate presumptions about Iraq that continue to hinder progress in establishing economic vitality and security.

Reconstruction in Iraq

Following the fall of the Hussein regime, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$2.48 billion via the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund (IRRF 1) followed by an additional \$18.2 billion (IRRF 2) to support the reconstruction of Iraq. The planning associated with this investment allocated percentages among six key sectors (Table 1).

The \$20.7 billion in total IRRF appropriations was only a fraction of the \$60 billion the World Bank estimated Iraq would need to fully modernize its infrastructure. However, it does represent a sizeable down payment on what will be an ongoing effort to rebuild damaged Iraqi infrastructure—an effort that will take many years to complete.

IRAQI RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION FUNDING ALLOCATION I & II	
Electricity	30 percent
Public Works and Water	23 percent
Security and Justice	7 percent
Oil	10 percent
Buildings, Health, and Education	6 percent
Transportation and Communications	3 percent

Table 1.

This investment was managed by the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in 2003 and 2004. It transitioned to Department of State oversight in August 2004.¹ Under the IRRF, hundreds of projects were completed across all areas of Iraq—a legacy of goodwill that has received little positive acknowledgement in the media. Employing Iraqis was one desirable aspect of these projects, but it was not the main aim. The goal was to establish a basic infrastructure capable of supporting a stable society and economy.

To augment the IRRF, the CPA in 2003 created the Brigade Commander's Discretionary Recovery Program to Directly Benefit the Iraqi People, since renamed the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP). Beginning in 2004, Congress, appropriated a total of over \$1.7 billion in CERP funding to enable unit-level military commanders to quickly fund local construction projects.² Over the past three years, an increasing percentage of CERP investments has been focused on creating employment as a primary objective via small construction and service projects.

Noticeable in its absence in reconstruction is a focus on restoration of sustained employment through revitalization of Iraqi industry. There are a number of reasons for this, most of them the result of well-intended presumptions that have proven inaccurate and a failure to adjust policy when these inaccuracies became apparent.

Iraqi Industry

Prior to 2003, the Iraqi workforce was generally acknowledged as among the most diverse, educated, and broadly skilled in the Middle East. Many presumed that UN sanctions imposed from

1991 to 2003 had negatively impacted this position, yet there was a widely held opinion among Western leaders that Iraq had the potential to become a unique nation in the Middle East—not simply a model for democratic government, but also a model for a diversified economy in a region too long dependent strictly on oil for revenue. That vision remains unrealized.

Upon their arrival in Iraq, CPA economic leaders presumed that, under the Ba'athist Hussein government, the Iraqi economy was typically Soviet in its structure. There was ample evidence to support this presumption. Ministries were highly empowered, decisions were heavily centralized, and industry was largely state-owned, with over 200 factories covering a range of industrial sectors. According to the World Bank, over 500,000 people worked in state-owned enterprises prior to 2003. Most factories were overstaffed with workers, and payrolls served in many cases as reward funds for political patronage or corruption. Based on these facts, the CPA assumed that Iraqi factories were incapable of manufacturing goods that would be competitive in the world market.

Given this situation, CPA economic leaders applied policy successfully employed in Eastern Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain. Lessons from Eastern Europe seemed clear: nations that were more aggressive in their divestiture and disempowerment of state-owned industry, either through rapid privatization or shutdown of operations, experienced the most rapid growth, while nations that were more socially sensitive in their approach generally lagged behind those that applied “shock therapy” to their state-owned industrial sectors. At the root of the shock-therapy approach was the assumption that a free market of new, naturally competitive industries would thrive best in the absence of competition from existing subsidized public-sector operations.

In 2003, U.S. forces were welcomed as liberators. The Iraqi diaspora indicated a strong desire to invest in their home country, and there was an image of Iraq as ripe for private investment—a place with a long-constrained skilled workforce ready to move out of staid public industries and into vibrant new private businesses. It is easy to understand the assumptions that a free market would rapidly emerge and create full employment in Iraq.

Based on these assumptions, a series of decisions were made that, in retrospect, sowed the seeds of economic malaise and fueled insurgent sympathies. Because of fears of potential theft, corruption, or transfer of funds to terror networks, each state-owned factory's cash balance in state-owned banks was seized and transferred into the Development for Iraq (DFI) fund as a contribution to infrastructure reconstruction projects. Cash-receivable balances were cancelled for each factory, essentially stopping all cash flow and starving factories of the working capital necessary to sustain operations. The economic portion of the CPA reconstruction plan explicitly prohibited commanders and diplomats from doing any business with state-owned industries. De-Ba'athification stripped the government of the central planning staff formerly responsible for managing industrial demand, and as a result, orders to many factories essentially dried up. Finally, the CPA implemented a new salary structure, turning the salary of the average worker in an Iraqi factory into a stipend worth 40 percent of that worker's pay under the Hussein regime. The goal of this salary structure was to ensure that workers could meet basic needs for food and shelter, but also to encourage them to take new jobs quickly in the private businesses that would arise in the new Iraqi free-market economy.

The effect of this combination of policies was swift. Industrial production collapsed across sectors. Importation of goods increased dramatically. Food processing factories were idle, depriving farmers of markets for produce and grain. Fertilizer factories experienced production declines of over 90 percent, which transformed Iraq from a regional net exporter of urea-based fertilizer to a nation with significant shortages of fertilizer. Net agricultural production in Iraq has decreased by over 50 percent since 2003.

Heavy industry experienced similar declines. Factories manufacturing a variety of industrial products, including trucks, tractors, buses, pipeline equipment, pressure vessels, cement, construction material, and basic machining experienced reductions in production in excess of 80 percent. Many essentially shut their doors.

As industrial output declined, imports of goods increased exponentially. In an effort to open the Iraqi market to goods long denied to Iraqi consumers



Courtesy of author

Workers assembling a bus in the SCAI bus and tractor factory, Iskandariyah, Iraq.

under UN sanctions, the CPA allowed and encouraged open international trade. This resulted in a burst of consumption by Iraqis and a corresponding rapid expansion of the retail sales sector, but had a wide range of other impacts—including further depression of economic activity in Iraqi factories, over-consumption of electrical power on a strained national electrical grid, and the near-crippling of Iraqi agriculture as cheap produce and foodstuffs poured across the border from neighboring states, especially Iran. This open trade situation has remained largely unchanged over the past four years.

Initial post-occupation unrest discouraged private investment. With Eastern Europe, the European Union had been ready to make investments to take advantage of a lower-wage skilled workforce, but the absence of such a bloc in Iraq made the post-Soviet shock-therapy approach ineffective there. The U.S. Government's focus on large construction contracts without incentives for Iraqi managerial capacity development did result in improvements in infrastructure, and Iraqis were employed for the duration of those projects; however, those projects did not create sustained employment or managerial competence, and upon project completion, associated jobs ceased. The failure to recognize

the negative effects of these initial policies and to adjust accordingly represents a major shortcoming of economic development efforts to date.

Unemployment in Iraq

Unemployment in Iraq today is very high by any standard, and is a major contributor to instability.³ It is measured by the U.S. Agency for International Development and the Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology, the Iraqi agency responsible for social statistics in partnership with the UN. Categories of unemployment are defined, based on perceived humanitarian risk, as segments of the workforce at risk of hunger or homelessness. The measurements are unemployment (no job, no income), 18 percent; underemployment (employed less than 15 hours per week and at humanitarian risk), 38 percent; and total unemployment/underemployment, 56 percent.

Because workers at state-owned industries continue to receive approximately 40 percent of their pay, they are not viewed as being at humanitarian risk, and therefore are not counted in the unemployment/underemployment statistics. In any other nation, these workers would be counted as unemployed and on social welfare. Adding this estimated population of 500,000 workers to the statistics increases effective unemployment/underemployment to over 60 percent.

The impact of unemployment in Iraq is exacerbated by family dynamics. In the West, a single worker supports, on average, four dependents, but in Iraq, a single worker supports eight.⁴ Thus, losing a job has twice the negative impact on family well-being in Iraq than in Western nations.

This level of unemployment among a formerly skilled workforce would cause massive social upheaval in any culture. At the peak of the Great Depression in the United States, unemployment reached 25 percent, and social unrest was widespread. In a culture already targeted by terrorist networks and violence, a 60 percent unemployment rate contributes greatly to sympathy for the insurgents. Every military command in Iraq has examples of captured insurgents engaging in acts of violence for cash. In the absence of any economic opportunity, young Iraqi men are easily tempted to engage in violence for hard currency.

After four years of postwar economic strife, average Iraqis no longer believe America has their

best interests at heart. Conversations with Iraqi businessmen invariably include conspiratorial accusations about America's desire to subjugate the Iraqi workforce.

It is regrettable that the net effect of U.S. policy was to shut down Iraqi industry. This had immediate direct effects on employment and continues to have negative secondary effects on agriculture, small business, and society at large. Our men and women in uniform face an immeasurably difficult task attempting to establish and maintain security in such an environment.

There is one final statistic to consider. While today Iraqi unemployment is at crisis levels, 40 percent of the Iraqi population is under the age of 15. These young Iraqis are a large pool of future recruits for terrorist networks. Creating economic opportunity and hope for a future in Iraq is therefore absolutely essential to our national security. We ignore this problem at our peril.

An Opportunity Recognized

In the fall of 2006, coalition commanders, to include Lieutenant General Peter Chiarelli, then commanding Multi-National Corps-Iraq, forced a policy debate within the U.S. Government regarding state-owned industry. At the direction of Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England, the Task Force for Business and Stability Operations—Iraq (TF-BSO) was established, placing a team of highly qualified American and international manufacturing leaders and business analysts in Iraq. The task force supports commands by providing civilian expertise in industrial operations and factory management—skills not previously found in the American presence in Iraq. Detailed on-site assessments of industrial operations in Iraq began in November 2006 under the security of, and in partnership with, civil affairs commands within deployed divisions across all of Iraq.

Restoring Iraqi state-owned factories is now a key economic element of the strategy of General David Petraeus, Commander, Multi-National Force-Iraq (MNF-I), for stabilizing Iraq. This strategy applies Petraeus's counterinsurgency doctrine of following the establishment of security with rapid economic development to restore normalcy in areas subjected to violence.

The TF-BSO serves as a civilian resource for MNF-I and is command-aligned with the Deputy

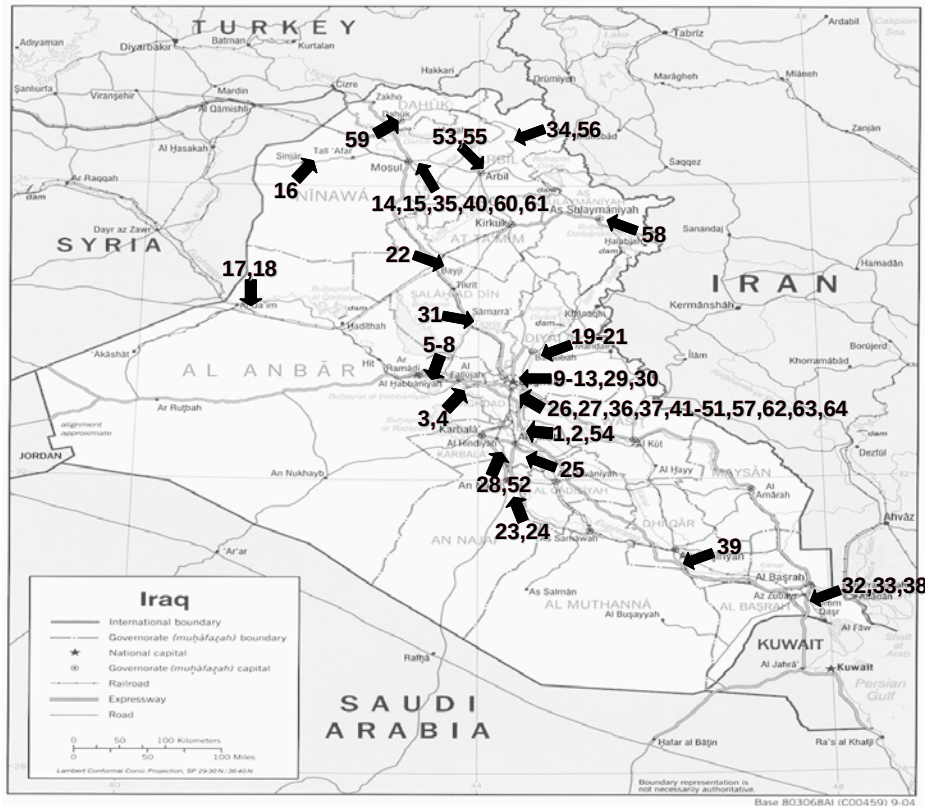
Commanding General for Strategic Effects. Task force resources work under the operational control of a variety of subsidiary organizations within MNF-I, including Joint Contracting Command (JCC) for Iraq/Afghanistan, the economic lines of operation within Multi-National Corps-Iraq, and each multi-national division (North, Baghdad, Central), as well as Multi-National Force-West. These command relationships ensure that every activity of the task force is aligned with the overall command intent of MNF-I as well as with the localized objectives of subordinate organizations.

To date, the TF-BSO has assessed 64 major industrial operations all across Iraq (see map and table 2). Much has been learned about the nature of these factories, their capabilities, and their relationships with the central government before and after regime change. Based on these assessments, many presumptions about the state of Iraqi industry have been revisited.

Presumptions and Facts

As aforementioned, the core assumption driving the application of shock-therapy economic policy to Iraqi industry was that Iraq was a classic Soviet-style central economy. The reality, however, is more complex. The old Iraqi economy could best be described as a semi-centralized kleptocracy. Many factories operated in a near autonomous manner, managing their own day-to-day affairs, selling their products directly to customers, and simply donating a portion of their profits to the Hussein regime. Others were highly controlled by the regime and were given classic central plans for production of goods, which were then shipped to other ministries for distribution.

There are geographic and industrial sector correlations to these different relationships between factories and the central government, and variations on these two primary models exist across the factories in Iraq. Each factory had a unique relationship with Baghdad that was largely dependent on the local population's relations with the Hussein regime, the plant manager's relationship with the Ba'ath party and the Hussein regime, and the nature of the factory's product. Heavily subsidized, non-competitive factories were more centrally managed. The more profitable a factory was, the more



1. State Company for Mechanical Industries (SCMI), Iskandariyah
2. State Company for Automotive Industry (SCAI), Iskandariyah
3. Iraqi State Company for Cement, Fallujah
4. Iraqi United Gypsum, Fallujah
5. State Company for Glass and Ceramics - Plate Glass, Ramadi
6. State Company for Glass and Ceramics - Consumer Glassware, Ramadi
7. State Company for Glass and Ceramics - Ceramic Tile, Ramadi
8. State Company for Glass and Ceramics - Ceramic Fixtures, Ramadi
9. Al Sumood State Company - Steel Structures, Taji
10. Al Sumood State Company - Foundry, Taji
11. Nassr State Company for Mechanical Ind. - Trailers, Taji
12. Nassr State Company for Mechanical Ind. - Foundry, Taji
13. Nassr State Company for Mechanical Ind. - Machine Shop, Taji
14. Northern Cement State Company - Badoush, Mosul
15. State Company for Drugs and Medical Supplies - Ninawah, Mosul
16. Northern Cement State Company - Sinjar, Sinjar
17. Iraqi State Company for Cement, Al Qa'im
18. State Company for Phosphate, Al Qa'im
19. Diyala State Company for Electrical Industries - Transformers, Baqubah
20. Diyala State Company for Electrical Industries - Electric Meters, Baqubah
21. Diyala State Company for Electrical Industries - Optic Cable, Baqubah
22. State Company for Fertilizer - North, Baiji
23. State Company for Ready Hand Made Wear, Najaf
24. State Company for Rubber Industries, Najaf
25. State Company for Textile Industries - Hilla, Hilla
26. State Company for Cotton Industries, Baghdad
27. State Company for Leather Industries, Baghdad
28. Al Furat State Company - Chemical, Al Hindiyah
29. That Al Sawary State Company for Chemical Industries - PVA, Taji
30. That Al Sawary State Company for Chemical Industries - Resins, Taji
31. State Company for Drugs and Medical Supplies - Samarra
32. State Company for Petrochemical Industries, Basrah
33. State Company of Fertilizers - South, Basrah
34. Harir Tomato Paste and Fruit Processing Plant, Harir
35. State Company for Construction Industries - Concrete Pillars, Mosul
36. State Company for Heavy Engineering Industry (HEESCO), Doura
37. State Company for Hand Woven Carpets, Baghdad
38. State Company for Paper Industries, Basrah
39. Ur State Company for Engineering Industry, Tallil
40. Northern Company for Furniture, Ninawah
41. Baghdad Factory for Furniture, Baghdad
42. State Company for Cotton Industries, Baghdad
43. State Company for Electrical Industries (SCEI), Baghdad
44. State Company for Vegetable Oils Industry, Baghdad
45. Al Monsour State Company, Baghdad
46. State Company for Tobacco and Cigarettes, Baghdad
47. Baghdad Electrical, Baghdad
48. State Company for Batteries Industries, Baghdad
49. State Company for Construction Industries - Stone Cutting, Baghdad
50. State Company for Woolen Industries, Baghdad
51. State Company for Dairy Products, Baghdad
52. Al Furat State Company - Detergent, Hindiyah
53. State Company for Construction Industries - Marble Cutting, Erbil
54. Southern State Company for Cement - Sedda, Sadat al Hindia
55. Kani Bottling, Kani
56. Kurdish Textiles, Erbil
57. State Owned Slaughterhouse, Baghdad
58. Sulymania Apparel Company, Sulymania
59. UB Group Brick Factory, Dahok
60. Mosul Ready to Wear, Mosul
61. Ahrum Foodstuff Manufacturing Company, Dahok
62. National Metal and Bicycle Plant, Mahmoudiyah
63. Ready Made Clothing (RMC Company) Mahmoudiyah
64. Al Hamara's Biscuit Company, Mahmoudiyah

Table 2. Iraqi factories assessed to date by the Task Force for Business and Stabilization Operations

independent the management was. In some cases, profitability led to greater independence; in others, independence from the ministry led to greater profitability. There was no fixed rule. Generally, factories in the southern (predominantly Shi'a) areas of Iraq were more centrally managed while factories in the west and north were more autonomous. But again, exceptions to this generalization have been found in each region.

The CPA's second primary assumption was that all Iraqi factories could never compete effectively in a market economy. As a general statement about Iraqi industry, this is simply inaccurate. Assessments have revealed many factory operations, idled now for four years, that had skilled workers, Western-educated management, modern equipment, and robotics and automation (less than five to ten years old in some cases). It is clear, based on the state of equipment in many Iraqi factories, that during the period of UN sanctions (1991-2003) significant investments in manufacturing capacity took place. Without question, some Iraqi factories are out of date and should not reopen, but they are the exception, not the rule. There are factories in Iraq idled today that could easily manufacture goods for consumption in Western markets if they were situated in other countries.

The CPA's third assumption about Iraqi business was that private companies would quickly make up for lost employment in the public sector. However, the shutting down of Iraqi public-sector factories negatively impacted the private sector. Under UN sanctions, private Iraqi companies could not sell goods internationally; they sold their goods inside Iraq, often serving as suppliers of goods and services to large state-run factories. Many state-run factories are surrounded by small businesses—machine shops, service businesses—similar to the industrial parks one finds anywhere in the world. Thus, shutting down state-run industries crippled the existing Iraqi private sector. While most future job growth will result from small private firms, the private sector cannot get off the ground as long as the core industrial base remains depressed.

The TF-BSO's mission is to revitalize Iraqi industry by restarting factories wherever possible. This should restore economic vitality and hope to the workforce and simplify the job of our armed forces by lessening economically motivated violence.

Approach to Industrial Revitalization

The task force is currently taking the following steps in its efforts to serve as a catalyst for the revitalization of Iraqi industry:

- *Contracting for goods and services to support U.S. forces.* To sustain U.S. forces in Iraq, we currently contract for several billion dollars a year in materiel, goods, and services, much of it imported from regional suppliers outside of Iraq. The task force is partnering with JCC-Iraq/Afghanistan and its commander, Air Force Major General Darryl Scott, to enable JCC to direct contracts to Iraqi private- and public-sector businesses. As a result of these efforts, supply and service contracts worth over \$100 million a month are now being awarded to Iraqi firms, generating jobs for almost 42,000 Iraqis—a significant economic stimulus.

- *Reestablishing intra-Iraqi demand.* The task force is actively working to reestablish business connections between sources of demand in Iraq and potential Iraqi factory suppliers. This has major social implications that have been ignored to date. As Iraqi factories were idled, vital business relationships between Iraqis were severed. Under UN sanctions, Iraqi factories did not export goods; they sold to other Iraqis. Sunni sold to Shi'a, Shi'a sold to Kurd, and so on. These commercial ties are critical in all cultures; they form a web of beneficial relationships that stabilize society. Severing these ties has fueled social destabilization and sectarian biases. Recreating mutually beneficial economic ties among Iraqi sects, tribes, and regions is critical to establishing a stable, prosperous Iraq.

- *Linking Iraqi industry to the global economy.* The task force has successfully engaged, and continues to engage, senior executives from American and international industry to provide support for Iraqi industrial revitalization. International businesses receive the following appeal: "If your firm is acquiring a good or service internationally, and an existing Iraqi business can demonstrate capacity to provide that good or service, consider adding that business to your base of suppliers." The response has been encouraging. Within American industry there is an untapped reservoir of goodwill for our armed forces and a strong willingness to assist when asked. To support the military surge strategy with a corresponding economic surge, these efforts must accelerate.

The effort to link Iraqi businessmen to global economic relationships has potentially far-reaching strategic implications. Almost without exception, business leaders across Iraq have expressed a strong desire for access to the business opportunities that are driving economic growth and prosperity across eastern and southern Asia. Estimates place the Iraqi gross domestic product in 2007 at \$40 billion, with most of this coming from oil and gas production. Gross domestic product in the United States, by contrast, exceeds \$12 trillion. Shifting a small percentage of the demand we currently place for goods and services from nations such as China and India to Iraq would improve the livelihood of every Iraqi worker, creating goodwill and partnership in place of disappointment, frustration, and their attendant violence.

Creating a diverse, globally integrated economy in Iraq would send a powerful signal of inclusion to the entire Middle East. It would undermine the radical messages of terror networks that prey on perceptions that the Middle East is being left behind economically due to sinister intent.

Upon restarting factories, the task force will provide the Iraqi Government with privatization plans for each operation with restored production. Privatizing factories that are viable, operating entities is far easier than holding a fire sale of idled plants and equipment. The task force has received significant statements of interest from Iraqi, regional, and international businesses eager to invest in Iraq once stability takes hold.

Progress to Date

In assessing Iraqi factories, TF-BSO has found that each factory has a unique set of needs to fulfill before it can restore full production and employment. These include spare parts, equipment maintenance, workforce training, generators to ensure

sustained electrical power, working capital for raw materials, and in some cases, simply market demand for products. Where equipment or training is required, funding is needed in small amounts. Typically, the restart costs for an Iraqi factory do not exceed \$1 million.

The task force has developed a prioritized list of factories eligible for restoration of employment and has aligned this list with commanders' priorities and the requirements for economic stabilization driven by the Baghdad Security Plan.

To date, six factories have restored production operations. These factories include major industrial operations in Iskandariyah, a town thirty miles south of Baghdad on the "fault-line" of the Sunni-Shi'a sectarian divide and a hotbed of insurgent sympathies resulting from economic depression. In Najaf, a large, modern clothing factory has been restarted, restoring employment to over 1800 employees. Over 70 percent of these employees are women, including supervisors and engineering staff. The six factories represent only a small beginning. With modest sufficient funding, the task force believes it can restart dozens of factories in calendar year 2007, restoring employment to tens of thousands of Iraqis and creating significant economic uplift in wide areas of the country.



The author (in sunglasses) discusses operational details with the director of plant operations during a tour of a fertilizer plant in Bayji, Iraq, 28 February 2007.

U.S. Army/SFC Robert C. Brogan

Challenges and Issues

The total funds required to restart Iraqi industries that are viable (that is, have not been looted or damaged) is estimated at less than \$200 million. Until the 2007 Defense Supplemental Budget appropriated \$50 million to the task force to fund industrial revitalization, there were no provisions in the U.S. Government budget to support this initiative. Under CPA orders that are now Iraqi law, the Iraqi budget cannot be invested in state-owned factories; thus, the Iraqi budget does not include funds to restart idled industries. This leaves us with a \$150 million shortfall.

Given these constraints, the TF-BSO has partnered with the Iraqi Government, specifically the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Industry and Minerals, to establish a low-interest loan program run by state-owned banks. The Iraqi Government subsequently approved issuing \$26 million in loans to restart over 20 factories. Regrettably, after several months of negotiation over this relatively small amount of funding, as of the time of publication no loans have been made to factories. Ongoing debates among various U.S. and Iraqi governmental organizations about the legality of these loans, philosophical discussions about the appropriateness of state-owned banks making loans at below-commercial terms, and a general lack of urgency within layers of bureaucracy have hindered the funding of factory restarts via loans. As a result, less progress can be reported than was expected at this stage of the effort.

The TF-BSO plans to quickly apply its \$50 million in congressionally appropriated funds to restart as many factories as possible. Its goal is to provide the minimum materiel, training, or other tangible support needed to get a factory started again. This effort is about restoring employment lost in 2003 and giving Iraq's business community a chance to develop. It aims to lift the core industrial base out of depression, with multiplying benefits to other sectors, especially agriculture, retail sales, small businesses, and other secondary economies that idled industries have negatively impacted.

What Must Be Done

To achieve an economic awakening in Iraq, we must reengage Iraq's large base of skilled workers. To achieve political reconciliation among sects, we must reenergize mutually beneficial economic

relationships. These universal truths applied to postwar Europe, and they apply to postwar Iraq as well. Iraqi business leaders want the same things business leaders in every other part of the world want: a secure home for their families, education for their children, and access to economic opportunity in which hard work brings prosperity.

The time to provide that access is now. A comprehensive plan for industrial revitalization should include three new actions:

- *Restoration of factory bank account balances in state-owned banks.* Factories assessed by the task force to date that have a competent management team and are viable for restoration of production should be told what conditions to meet to have their balances restored. At a minimum, they should have to establish a viable business plan, a profit-and-loss-based management structure, a compensation plan that provides incentives for business growth, and a capital investment strategy. Task force accountants would monitor each transaction against the restored funds for a period of one year to ensure that business plans are followed and funds are expended only on factory operations or capital investments.

Restoring the bank-account balances would empower management teams to make decisions, cutting out the non-Iraqis who currently decide which investments to make and which spending plans to execute for the minor equipment, training, and raw material purchases needed to support restarts. Most important, restoring the balances would immediately stimulate economic activity as factories made rapid capital investments and acquired materiel to restore normal production.

- *Implementation of fair trade practices for the Iraqi economy.* Establishing standard tariff and trade policies with neighboring countries would create breathing room for many sectors of the Iraqi economy, including industry and agriculture. If the United States had to operate under the trade practices currently in place in Iraq, it would lose every textile mill and most of its farms to international competitors. Iraq must be placed on a fair trade platform with its neighbors if its economy is to recover.

- *Alignment of economic development with political reconciliation efforts.* The loss of economic ties among segments of the Iraqi population has removed the mutually beneficial relationships between tribes and sects that help stabilize society.

WHAT MUST BE DONE

- **Restore factory bank account balances in state-owned banks.**
- **Implement fair trade practices for the Iraqi economy.**
- **Align economic development with political reconciliation efforts.**

Our efforts at political reconciliation must include necessary economic motivators—the reestablishment of economic ties that are mutually beneficial to different sects, creating motivators for stability. The absence of these economic incentives make political reconciliation far more challenging.

Overall, we need to apply lessons learned from Iraq to better support our security and political objectives. The U.S. Government is designed to project two primary instruments of foreign policy: diplomacy and force. We must identify the key actions necessary to leverage the U.S. economy more effectively as a vital tool for post-conflict stabilization. An operating model for interagency collaboration that leverages the industrial expertise of the Department of Defense, the policy guidance of the Department of State, the monetary policy and fiscal discipline of the Department of the Treasury, the development expertise of the Department of Agriculture, and the business relationships of the Department of Commerce is missing today in Iraq. Defining that model and putting it to work is a critical step if we are to leverage our greatest national asset—our economic strength—in future conflicts.

A Challenge for Our Time

The American economy is an engine of prosperity not only for the American people, but for the world at large. Idealized images of our lifestyle saturate the world through television and the Internet. These images, constant reminders to the disenfranchised

of the challenges within their own societies, foster the resentment on which terrorist networks feed. The United States has yet to use its most potent weapon—its economy—in support of its armed forces, whose mission grows more difficult as Iraq's economic malaise worsens. Again, George C. Marshall best articulated the situation we face:

I am sorry that on each occasion I have said something publicly in regard to our international situation, I've been forced by the necessities of the case to enter into rather technical discussions. But to my mind, it is of vast importance that our people reach some general understanding of what the complications really are, rather than react from a passion or a prejudice or an emotion of the moment. As I said more formally a moment ago, we are remote from the scene of these troubles. It is virtually impossible at this distance merely by reading, or listening, or even seeing photographs or motion pictures, to grasp at all the real significance of the situation. And yet the whole world of the future hangs on a proper judgment. It hangs, I think, to a large extent on the realization of the American people, of just what are the various dominant factors. What are the reactions of the people? What are the justifications of those reactions? What are the sufferings? What is needed? What can best be done? What must be done?

—George C. Marshall, June 1947

As liberators of the Iraqi people, we have an obligation to seek remedies to Iraq's postwar depression. This depression puts our armed forces at risk today, and our children at risk of violence tomorrow. It is the challenge of our time. How will we respond? **MR**

NOTES

1. Report to Congress of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, April 2007.

2. President George W. Bush, National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 44, <<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-44.html>>.

3. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), *Employment Participation and Unemployment in Iraq* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office [GPO]), May 2007.

4. USAID, *Household's Average Monthly Consumption by Quintiles* (Washington, DC: GPO, June 2007).

SURROUNDED:



Seeing the World from IRAN's Point of View

Houman A. Sadri, Ph.D.

We can tell them we want them to stop that, but if there's any hope of the Iranians living according to the international rule of law and stopping, for instance, their nuclear weapons development, we can't just talk to them. If they don't play by the rules, we've got to use our force, and to me that would include taking military action to stop them from doing what they're doing.

—Senator Joseph Lieberman,
Face the Nation, CBS News,
10 June 2007

Bomb Iran, Bomb bomb bomb...

—sung by Sen. John McCain to the tune of
Beach Boy song "Barbara Ann" in
response to a question regarding
Middle Eastern foreign policy options
at Murrells Inlet VFW Hall in South Carolina.

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PHOTO: An Iranian protester holds a banner defending his country's nuclear activities at a demonstration to mark the 28th anniversary of the Islamic revolution, Tehran, 11 February 2007. (AP Photo/ Hasan Sarbakhshian)

The author wishes to express his appreciation to those former and current IRI officials and Iranian scholars who shared their views about the uneasy U.S.-Iran relationship. He also acknowledges the generous travel and research support of the U.S. Department of State, the Fulbright program, International Research and Exchanges Board, and the University of Central Florida. The author is solely responsible for the ideas presented herein and takes full responsibility for any errors.

SINCE 1979, when the Islamic revolution in Iran effectively severed diplomatic and security ties between Tehran and Washington, international tit-for-tat media stories have become the norm in the U.S.-Iran relationship. Recently, however, there has been an ominous new twist as the focus has shifted to reporting on Iranian efforts to acquire a nuclear capability together with U.S. diplomatic responses—including clear threats—aimed at preventing Iran from doing so. The main question now is, Are the United States and Iran on a collision course?

The crux of the current matter is ostensibly this: the Islamic Republic of Iran (IRI) insists on its right as a sovereign nation to acquire nuclear technology for peaceful use, while the Bush administration asserts that the IRI really wants the technology in order to produce nuclear weapons with which it can threaten its neighbors and dominate the oil-rich Middle East.¹ Because the United States and much of Western Europe depend on the region for energy, the Bush administration claims that Iran's move cannot be tolerated, so the issue is at the UN Security Council.² Not surprisingly, interest in this issue is global, especially because the U.S. Government has publicly vilified the IRI and its revolution for decades, characterizing both as international threats. Consequently, the reading public has become accustomed to seeing Iran singled out for criticism by U.S. policy makers. Prior to the nuclear issue, U.S. media coverage focused mainly on Iran's support for supposed terrorist groups, its attempts to export its Islamic revolution to other nations, and its determined opposition to Israel. Thus, long before the latest impasse over nuclear technology, news associated with Tehran frequently captured headlines.

Yet, for all its public posturing in the media and diplomatic animus toward Iran, the United States has done shockingly little to resolve policy differences with its antagonist, even when significant opportunities have presented themselves. Instead, since 1979, American leaders have shaped their policies toward Iran through the unforgiving and non-pragmatic prism of the Iranian hostage crisis. As a result, they have consistently failed to seek the real causes of current policy disagreements or to pursue mutually acceptable solutions with Iran itself. In short, U.S. policy makers do not understand contemporary Iran and, frankly, have shown little interest in doing so.

This essay aims to help bridge the chasm of understanding by introducing a little of Iran's perspective, which has been a missing vital dimension of the current U.S. national and international debate. I offer my observations in the hope that they will encourage initiatives aimed at a new engagement policy, one that will mitigate the chances of an unintended or needlessly escalated conflict between the U.S. and Iran.

Iran's Worldview: U.S. Policy of Strategic Encirclement

An initial sense of the Iranian leadership's current worldview may be best perceived simply by looking at a map of the Middle East as seen through their eyes. As a Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guard) officer once expressed to me while discussing Iran's security situation depicted on a map on his office wall, most Iranian leaders now share, with increasing anxiety, the common view that the U.S. is following a policy of gradually encircling Iran with hostile American forces based in neighboring countries. They note that 30 years ago the U.S. had only a couple of military bases in the region—ironically, located in Iran itself. Now, U.S. bases are in all the Persian Gulf states except Iran, and in one form or another, U.S. forces are in all of Iran's neighboring states—Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Turkey—except for Turkmenistan. Moreover, the U.S. has special ties with Pakistan (a supposed ally against Al-Qaeda), Turkey (a NATO ally that has a special defense treaty with Israel), and Azerbaijan (where hundreds of American military advisors with equipment are pouring into a country whose oil industry is already closely tied

to U.S. interests).³ Along with this gradual buildup of forces, U.S. leaders from both political parties have kept up a steady stream of threatening rhetoric, publicly calling for regime change in Iran. This is a cause for special alarm, given U.S. military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001.

Thus, Iranian leaders ask themselves, under such conditions, what should any independent, sovereign nation prudently do to ensure its own survival? What, for example, would the U.S. do if a powerful foreign nation spouting unending political rhetoric and threats against it, including open support for the overthrow of its government, were to engage in a sustained policy of building military bases and stationing military forces in Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean?

U.S. Inconsistency on Nuclear Issues

From the Iranian perspective, U.S. policy toward Iran is actually mystifying, if not irrational, because it runs counter to what many assert would be in the U.S.'s best long-term interests, both regionally and globally. For Iranian leaders, such puzzling ambiguity is evident in what they perceive to be the capricious way in which the U.S. attempts to have international laws and conventions applied to various nations. This is especially true with regard to countries it seeks to have declared in violation of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). For example, why does the U.S. want Iran treated as a pariah in the international community, but encourages relative deference to India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan—countries that more than a few observers believe have violated the NPT in acquiring nuclear capabilities?

In the eyes of many Iranian leaders, the baffling inconsistency is exemplified in the different policy approaches the U.S. has towards Iran and Pakistan. To justify their opposition to Iran's nuclear program, U.S. leaders have frequently promoted international concern over the emergence of a so-called "Islamic nuclear bomb." Yet the Islamic nuclear bomb already exists, in Pakistan, and has for some time. Although Pakistan clearly violated the same standards of international law to acquire nuclear weapons, the U.S. has neither censured Pakistan nor called for international sanctions against it. Quite the opposite occurred: the U.S. has cultivated cordial relations

with Islamabad and sought common ground with it on a host of issues of mutual concerns. The U.S. has done this despite the highly questionable legitimacy of President Pervez Musharaf's military dictatorship, Pakistan's poor human rights record, its clear instability as a nation, and a great amount of evidence indicating widespread corruption in government. These factors, together with Pakistan's maintenance of nuclear weapons and development of delivery systems, have barely slowed massive U.S. aid to Musharaf's regime.

The inequity of treatment is especially confusing to Iranian leaders because the U.S.'s preferential treatment of Pakistan continues even though Islamabad has proven to be a lackluster partner in the War on Terrorism. Not only has Musharaf cut a deal with Pakistan's Northwest Province tribal leaders (who shelter Al-Qaeda and the Taliban) assuring them that he would not to interfere with their de facto self-governance, but there is also considerable evidence that Pakistan's intelligence service is actually helping the Taliban reestablish itself in Afghanistan. Furthermore, Pakistan continues to tolerate the existence on its soil of large numbers of Wahhabi-supported madrassas, religious schools with anti-American/anti-Western curricula that have been breeding grounds for terrorists, some of whom have been identified as attackers of the U.S. and its allies.

The Iranians are just as mystified by the U.S. response to North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Despite verbal threats and test missile launches clearly aimed at intimidating Japan, America's closest ally in the Far East, the U.S. has offered to help Kim Jong-il build advanced nuclear reactors (although for so-called peaceful purposes). If such an offer were made to Iran, U.S. policy makers might be shocked by the positive results for all concerned.

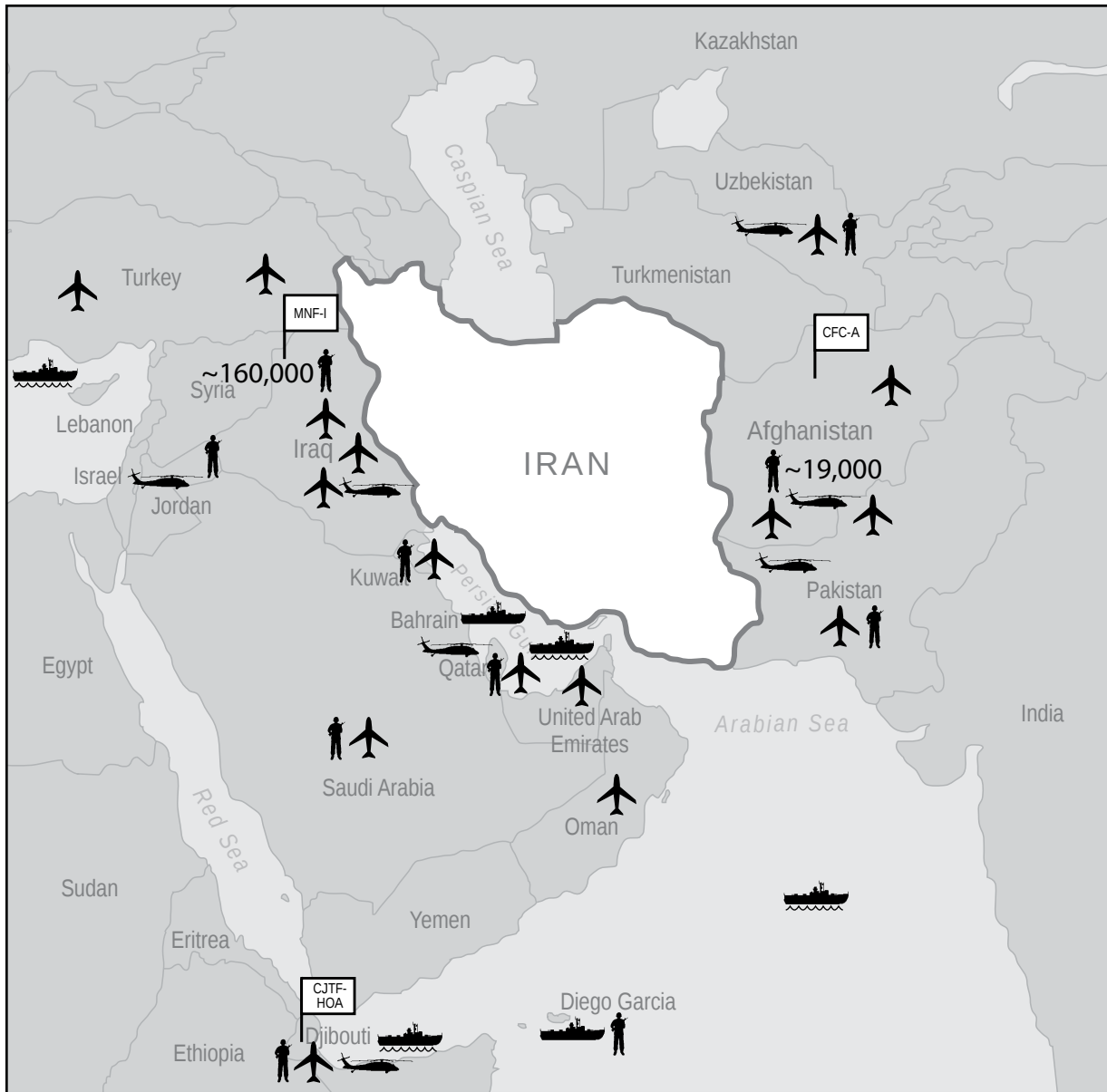
Looking at how the U.S. deals with Pakistan and North Korea, Iranian leaders must have a hard time understanding what real obstacles stand in the way of cooperation between their country and the U.S. This is doubly true because in many ways, both nations are natural allies in the world's current security environment: they have a common interest in cooperating against international terrorism, which targets both Shi'a and Western targets with equal malevolence.

Regardless, the U.S. continues to take every opportunity to vilify Iran publicly by highlight-

ing "unconstructive Iranian moves" that constitute "mounting evidence" of Tehran's nefarious regional intentions. Particularly insulting to Iran in what is perceived as a campaign of defamation was President Bush's public assertion, shortly after the 9/11 attacks, that Iran was one of three nations in a worldwide "axis of evil" (the other two being North Korea and Saddam Hussein's Iraq). In attaching such a label to Iran, Bush discounted the fact that neither Iran nor any Iranian national had any involvement whatsoever in the 9/11 attacks; in fact, the attackers all came from Saudi Arabia, America's so-called regional ally. Moreover, the label was attached even though Iran was one of the few countries in the world to allow mass expressions of solidarity with the 9/11 victims, with tens of thousands of Iranians conducting candlelight vigils in Tehran and other Iranian cities immediately after the attacks to show sympathy for and solidarity with the victims.

For many Iranian leaders, such a clearly skewed vision on the part of U.S. policy makers implies a calculated proclivity for selective perception that is clearly not at the maturity level expected of the world's lone remaining superpower. Moreover, the clear ignorance and lack of discernment about the true state of affairs (no weapons of mass destruction) that led to the U.S. invasion of Iraq is alarming to many Iranian leaders. To them it provides evidence that the sheer clumsiness of future miscalculations on the part of the U.S. leadership regarding Iran could also needlessly precipitate conflict.

Iranian leaders perceive that Washington does not listen effectively, and it compounds this problem by only seeing what it wants to see, ignoring information that does not fit its preconceived policy paradigm. This is especially true regarding positive overtures made by Iran or other developments taking place in the country that could be profitable for U.S. interests, if properly understood.⁴ Moreover, Washington's tendency to focus only on those Iranian actions that can be used as evidence to foster a negative image of Iran among Washington policy circles is viewed with great suspicion by some Iranian leaders. They see it as part of a long-term plan conceived by the U.S. to promote an international perception that would lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy about Iran that might be used as justification for military action against it.



LEGEND

-  Major airfields either in current use or formerly used for coalition military operations
-  Countries in which U.S. ground forces are stationed or from which combat operations have been launched within the last 4 years
-  Countries from which heliborne combat operations were launched within the last 4 years
-  Naval base
-  Afloat naval forces

Sources: DOD webpage, CENTCOM public affairs office, and open-source media including CNN and Global Security.org.

Summary (as of 21 May 2007) of coalition forces in region

U.S. Troops	227,000
Coalition Troops	19,000
Combat Aircraft	1,300+
Combatant Ships	40+

Coalition Partners

Iraq	26 nations
Afghanistan	18 nations
Horn of Africa	8 nations

Learning to Dance with Iran

It takes two to tango. The U.S. and Iran are like partners dancing the tango, but each with a different sense of beat and rhythm. As one missteps, the other misunderstands, so that each one questions the talent and capability of the other. However, differences can be overcome if each partner has a desire to cooperate. And so far, in the Iranian view, the U.S. has shown no such desire to dance, as evinced by its having ignored several opportunities to begin a dialogue with Iran on rapprochement.

Many in the IRI Government assert that Washington's concern over Iran's potential nuclear capability is not the real obstacle impeding improved relations between it and the U.S. at all. It is the unresolved historical issues between the U.S. and Iran, many predating the 1979 revolution, that have to be resolved before the two nations can begin to normalize relations.⁵

To be fair, I have to state that there are some who have a different theory. Many who have examined detailed and focused academic research and are familiar with the diverse views regularly expressed by Iranian officials confidently assert that the Iranian nuclear program, Iranian support for what it regards as fraternal revolutionary movements in other nations, and even the nature of Iran's anti-Israeli stand can be best understood as effects or symptoms of policy that stem from the evolving character of the Iranian revolution. Those who hold this view would say that if you are to deal with Iran, the most important question to ask is, How should we deal with the effects of the Iranian Islamic revolution?

I have to agree with the first group. The problems between Tehran and Washington did not originate, as some observers claim, with Bush's axis of evil speech, nor did they begin with the 1979 hostage crisis. The roots of the current unease have to do with unresolved historical issues between the U.S. and Iran as far back as the U.S.-engineered coup in 1953 that returned a monarch to power.⁶

***The roots of the current unease...
[go] as far back as the
U.S.-engineered coup in 1953 that
returned a monarch to power.***

Brief Summary of Historical Points of Tension

Prior to 1953, many Iranian intellectuals and opposition members were enamored of American ideals and policies. Seeking to emulate the U.S. and leverage its power in the defense of national interests, these Iranians promoted U.S. involvement in Iranian political affairs, hoping that it would counterbalance and check the British and Russian rivalry for influence that had long beggared the country.

Known as "The Great Game," this rivalry had led to the division of Iran into two large spheres of influence in 1907. Iranians of all stripes were humiliated by such blatant foreign interference. A proud people, they regarded themselves as disgraced heirs to an ancient civilization, a glorious history, and a culture with impressive achievements in art and science. Their resentment led to the development of an anti-hegemonic spirit in Iran and the attempt to enlist the "distanced and disinterested" Americans on their behalf. Their strategy included establishing diplomatic and trade missions with the U.S. and hiring American advisors, including the well-known U.S. financial consultant Morgan Shuster.⁷ The strategy of promoting American support appeared to bear its initial fruit in 1946, when American diplomatic pressure forced Joseph Stalin to abandon plans to set up two satellite states on Iranian soil.

However, courting the Americans eventually backfired because, once the U.S. was established as an economic and political force in Iran, its involvement in cold-war competition with the Soviet Union became another "Great Game." One result was that the U.S. began to look upon Iran as merely a pawn to check Soviet influence.

The most egregious action stemming from American involvement in Iran occurred in 1953, when the U.S. helped engineer a coup against Mohammad Mossadegh, the democratically elected prime minister of Iran. This coup reinstalled the Shah, Reza Pahlavi, on the Peacock Throne. American policy makers backed Pahlavi because they viewed him as both more anti-Soviet and more likely to support U.S. economic interests in his country, especially in the oil industry. Subsequently, the CIA (together with Israel's Mossad) helped to establish SAVAK, the Shah's infamous internal

security force, to curb popular uprisings.⁸ SAVAK soon penetrated every layer of Iranian society, successfully targeting opposition leaders and creating a pervasive atmosphere of fear and distrust.⁹ Consequently, SAVAK became a hated symbol not only of the Shah's oppression, but also of foreign, and especially U.S., interference in the country. In short, the coup and subsequent actions to stabilize the Shah blackened America's reputation among most Iranians.

Although the U.S. enjoyed the fealty of the Shah and his government after the coup, Iran's intellectuals, secular and nationalist politicians, and Islamists never forgave America for toppling Mossadegh's nationalist government and reinstating Pahlavi.¹⁰ Though Iran would make great economic and technological advances under the latter, resentment against him and his U.S. sponsors simmered among opposition leaders and the Iranian people from 1953 on. In 1979, that resentment boiled over.

The Islamic Revolution of 1979

The almost universal ill will created by the Shah's rule culminated in a spontaneous revolution that led to the wholesale expulsion of the U.S. presence in 1979. American policy makers were shocked, at least partly because U.S. intelligence experts had grossly underestimated both the deep public resentment that the Iranian populace had toward the U.S. and the depth of influence the revolution's core leadership, Iran's Shi'a mullahs, had as a political force—even though the latter had played a prominent role in the 1951 nationalist uprising that deposed the Shah (for the first time) and brought Mossadegh to power.

Anti-U.S. sentiment came to be personified by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Iran's senior cleric and the revolution's principal leader. Post-revolution, Khomeini consolidated his authority over the government at mass rallies by demonizing the U.S. for its support of the Shah and its role in subsidizing the Shah's crimes against the Iranian people.¹¹ America lost its last opportunity to salvage what it could of its image among the Iranian people during this tumultuous period when President Jimmy Carter, under pressure from such political voices as former secretary of state Henry Kissinger, allowed the fleeing Shah to seek medical treatment in the U.S., then gave him political asylum and refused



Former Iranian prime minister Mohammed Mossadegh during court proceedings at a military tribunal trying him for treason, 20 November 1953.



Picture of the imperial family of Iran after the coronation of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi as Shah of Iran, 26 October 1967.

to hand him over to Iran for trial. Carter's actions led many Iranians to suspect that the U.S. was planning another 1953-style coup to return the Shah to the throne once more. Particularly agitated were Islamist student groups, who responded by seizing the U.S. embassy and American diplomats, hoping to exchange their hostages for the Shah and prevent the rumored coup. Thus, the hostage crisis, which Carter interpreted as an aggressive move against U.S. interests, was in the eyes of those who initiated it a justifiable defensive measure aimed at saving the new revolution.¹²

In the Aftermath of a Lost Ally

The U.S. felt the Shah's fall keenly. Despite international concerns about human rights violations and other problems, Washington had, until the Carter administration, solidly supported the Shah, regarding him as a key ally in its attempt to contain Soviet expansion into the region. From President Eisenhower on, successive administrations had turned a blind eye to reported abuses and given the Shah wide-ranging diplomatic, economic, and military support. For example, Washington sold him many fully equipped F-14 Tomcats—the most sophisticated fighter-bomber in the U.S. arsenal at the time.

Still dealing with its defeat in Vietnam and facing setbacks in Central America and elsewhere, the U.S. viewed the rise of an openly antagonistic Islamic state as a great danger to American personnel and interests globally. Additionally, the seizure of its embassy, together with the taking of its citizens as hostages, was viewed as an insufferable international humiliation that could not go unanswered without inviting other such attacks against its interests globally.

Among all attacks on the U.S. embassies abroad, it is important to recall that Iranian students held 52 Americans hostage in November 1979, but none of the Americans were killed. In contrast, two Americans were killed in Pakistan when a mob set the U.S. embassy on fire in Islamabad two weeks later, but the U.S. took no serious measures against the Pakistani Government, which had failed to defend the embassy.¹³



One of 60 U.S. hostages, blindfolded and with his hands bound, is displayed to the crowd outside the U.S. Embassy in Tehran by Iranian hostage takers, 9 November 1979. Some of the militant students who seized the embassy in the Iranian capital flank the hostage.

AP

U.S. Support of Saddam in the Iran-Iraq War

The opportunity to blunt the “dangerous” revolutionary Islamic fervor spilling out of Iran and to exact a measure of revenge for the hostage crisis came soon for the U.S. In September 1980, Saddam Hussein invaded Iran to seize disputed territories with potential oil reserves. However, suspicion was high in Tehran that Iraq had proceeded with tacit U.S. encouragement and support, almost as a proxy to contain the Islamic revolution and take revenge on Iran's government.

This suspicion seemed confirmed when the U.S. established full diplomatic relations with Iraq, despite the latter's longstanding anti-American, anti-Israeli rhetoric and policies. Though Washington claimed neutrality, from Tehran's perspective the U.S. had clearly sided with Saddam, giving him material and diplomatic aid to isolate Iran on the world stage. The U.S. could also be seen as supporting Iraq by using delay-and-distract tactics whenever Iran complained to the UN and other international bodies about Iraq's use of chemical weapons, attacks on civilian centers, and harassment of international oil shipping in the Persian Gulf. Washington also gave Baghdad money, food, equipment, technology, and, most importantly, intelligence in its campaign against Tehran. Khomeini

probably best described the Iranian perception of the conflict when he called it the “imposed war.”

As the war proceeded, the U.S. clearly sought occasion to become more directly involved. It used the 1987 Iraqi attack on the USS *Stark*, in which 37 American Sailors died, as an excuse to begin escorting Kuwaiti tankers. Having increased its presence in the Gulf, the U.S. Navy informally entered the war against Iran, as American ships regularly challenged Iranian forces. Washington also showed zero tolerance toward any Iranian military effort to inhibit Saddam’s supporters in the Gulf. For instance, when the USS *Roberts* hit a mine in the Persian Gulf—with no loss of life—the U.S. Navy used the incident to justify destroying the Iranian Navy in a single day (28 April 1988) during Operation Praying Mantis.



DOD

A port quarter view of the guided missile frigate USS STARK (FFG 31) listing to port after being struck by an Iraqi-launched Exocet missile, May 1987.

Some Revolutionary Guard naval officers have opined that America’s burning desire to side with Iraq by provoking confrontations with Iran created a trigger-happy atmosphere among U.S. forces that eventually led to one of the war’s worst tragedies: the downing of an Iranian airliner by the USS *Vincennes*. The airliner was on a routine flight over the Gulf; the *Vincennes* was equipped with the most sophisticated radar. Two hundred-ninety civilian passengers died in the incident.¹⁴ The event shocked Iran and provided what many Iranians considered clear proof of American support for

Iraq’s invasion and its attempt to topple the revolutionary government.

Several commentators have suggested since that the *Vincennes* incident helped pressure Tehran into a cease-fire with Baghdad, ending the eight-year war. However, it was neither the destruction of Iran’s navy (the smallest Iranian force) nor the psychological shock of the airliner tragedy that finally forced Iran to accept a cease-fire. Rather, the IRI’s leaders finally recognized that, despite heavy Iranian sacrifices, they could not overcome Iraq’s superior tactical position and military hardware. Just as important, it became clear that the U.S. and its allies had the ability to prevent Iran from ending the war on terms favorable to itself. In the end, Tehran bitterly but pragmatically accepted diplomatic moves aimed at ending the war—a decision Khomeini likened to “drinking poison.”

Nevertheless, from the Iranian point of view, the long and costly war secured what the IRI leadership prized most: the survival of the revolutionary regime. For Tehran, this prize was as sweet as the American commitment not to interfere in Iranian affairs at the Algerian negotiations that ended the 1979 hostage crisis. (In fact, the U.S. commitment at the time was so significant for the IRI that Tehran agreed to accept the freezing of its assets and cooperate with American and international courts processing lawsuits against the IRI.)

Khomeini’s Death and a Change in Direction

With Khomeini’s death shortly after the war, the IRI’s ideological era ended. Ayatollah Khamenei was picked to replace Khomeini as supreme leader. Although Khamenei’s selection required a great deal of compromise (his clerical rank was much lower than Khomeini’s), he and President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani soon initiated the next chapter of IRI history.¹⁵ Their policies would be more nationalistic, pragmatic, and inwardly directed. Their major task, to rebuild the war-torn country, proved to be a humbling experience. One consequence was that the IRI learned the limits of its revolutionary message. It also came to accept Iraq’s status as the Gulf’s premier power. With the passing of the ideological and uncompromising Khomeini, Iran became more diplomatically accommodating toward regional and global powers.



AFP

The Islamic revolution's founder, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, greeted 2 February 1979 in Tehran by his supporters during his return to Iran after 15 years in exile in Iraq and France.

Saddam's Attack on Kuwait

Manifesting his characteristic unpredictability and treachery and enticed by an exhausted Iran ruled by untested leaders, Saddam Hussein resumed his campaign to expand Iraq's borders in 1990 by seizing Kuwait and threatening Saudi Arabia, even though both had generously supported him in his war with Iran.

Iraq's occupation of Kuwait was unacceptable to Iran's leaders, but they did not have enough residual military capability to challenge Saddam's well-equipped, battle-ready forces. Nor was there enough public support for another war: with a half-million killed in the 1980s war, most Iranians had no appetite for another conflict. Instead, public pressure pushed for efforts to recognize the war dead. In many cities, the water in pools and fountains ran red, to represent the blood of martyrs killed in action.¹⁶ When the shrewd Saddam unexpectedly withdrew from all Iranian territory gained in the Iran-Iraq War, he dampened what little inclination the Iranian populace might have had for another conflict with Iraq.

As history attests, Saddam was less successful in co-opting the U.S. The brutal nature of Iraq's

aggression against Kuwait and its direct threat to Saudi Arabia persuaded the U.S. that Saddam was an unreliable ally, one on the verge of dominating the world's oil supplies. Washington concluded that it had to act to evict Iraqi forces, return the Amir of Kuwait to power, and significantly reduce Iraq's military capability. In the end, the U.S.-led coalition that pummeled Iraq during Operation Desert Storm ushered in a new regional status quo, with Iran and Iraq more or less on a par.

The Golden Rules

While even a brief summary of the history between Iran and the U.S. should help explain the vexed nature of the two countries' relationship, there is another means that might throw some light on Iran's current worldview. Adapted from biology, the Golden Rules model assesses the imperatives and needs of nations through a biological lens, as if nations are organisms that go through similar life cycles. There are three Golden Rules.

Golden Rule #1. The first Golden Rule suggests that political entities such as countries or regimes manifest the same imperative to survive as living organisms; i.e., they try to survive at any cost, even when facing unfavorable odds. For example, many small European countries fought stoutly against Nazi invasion during World War II despite little hope of success. In 1776, the 13 loosely affiliated and relatively undeveloped American colonies showed the same kind of determination to survive as a country when they declared independence and fought against the superpower of the time, Great Britain. In fact, the U.S. War of Independence is a classic example of a revolutionary state, motivated by what it regarded as great ideals, refusing to bow down before a much stronger foreign power.

It is important to understand that Iran views its Islamic revolution as a similarly heroic stand against a very aggressive and intimidating alien power—specifically, the U.S.

Although its revolution differed from the U.S.'s in kind (religious versus secular) and outcome (the IRI has a supreme leader and Guardian Council who eclipse its popularly elected parliament, the Majlis), Iran sees itself as having no less courageously survived for almost three decades the intimidation, physical attacks, and international pressures sponsored by the era's foremost superpower. In the Iranian

mind, the struggle against the U.S. and the repulse of Iraq's U.S.-assisted invasion in the 1980s constitute an epic story of national struggle and regime survival purchased at heavy human and material cost.¹⁷

Some Iranian clerics assert that the nation's commitment to the struggle was, and is, a product of the inherently anti-hegemonic character of the Islamic revolution. They claim that the guiding principles of Iran's Islamic nonalignment strategy have been associated with the revolution from its beginning.¹⁸ Others assert instead that the IRI merely benefited from long and deeply held anti-hegemonic feeling that stemmed from national pride in Iran's ancient roots and bitter memories of the Great Game era.¹⁹ Whatever the case, Iranians take as much pride in their revolution as Americans do in their's. They revere the events of 1978-79 as the start of Iran's move into the upper echelon of the world's nations.

Golden Rule #2. According to the second Golden Rule, political entities that survive inevitably seek to grow and develop. History shows that countries, once established, use their natural and human resources, capital, and technology to pursue full development. Again, the U.S. provides a significant example.

When it declared independence in 1776, the U.S. was, as aforementioned, analogous to one of today's undeveloped countries. However, due to limited foreign interference in its domestic affairs (a result of geographic isolation) and access to fabulously abundant natural resources, revolutionary America began a process of economic, military, and political development that enabled it to reach great-power status by the turn of the 20th century. The U.S. continued to develop until it reached superpower status after WWII. With regard to what the future might hold, some experts suggest that there is a cyclical pattern to the life of any great nation: its power and prestige culminate at a certain point, and it begins to slide into irreversible decline—a tenet in keeping with the biological basis of the Golden Rule.²⁰ Whether the U.S. is near or has already reached such a point is being heatedly debated. Obviously, no one can definitively predict what the future holds for the U.S.—the model is only a model.

Unlike U.S. leaders, who see themselves as leading a relatively new world power, Iran's leaders see themselves as heirs of an ancient, proud, and multifaceted culture with varied origins. Such influences include a cultural legacy from the ancient

Persian Empire and the 7th-century introduction of Islam. Because Iranian national history goes back more than 5,000 years (versus the U.S.'s 230+) and encompasses several life cycles of growth and decline, Iranians interpret events through a much different historical prism. They see their Islamic revolution as the beginning of another life cycle of national growth destined to make them once again a great regional power.

One does not have to look hard to find evidence that Iran is on an upward azimuth in the world. Economically, politically, and militarily, all signs point to progress.

Economic development. Most observers note that the IRI economy has developed significantly since 1979. Islamic Iran's official annual growth rate is 6 percent. While that still lags behind the double-digit growth rate of the Shah's era, it has been achieved in the face of two major handicaps to growth: the long war with Iraq, during which the economy actually declined; and the U.S.-led containment strategy, with its decades of international sanctions that have included imposing trade restrictions, freezing assets, limiting direct foreign investment, and preventing Tehran from joining the World Trade Organization.²¹

In Iran, the theocratic character of the Islamic Republic obscures the reality that electoral considerations play an important role in politics. Since the Shah's fall in 1979, there have been nine presidential and seven parliamentary elections. Although the elections are open only to candidates approved by the clerical leadership, the campaigning and voting are taken seriously by the population. In 1997 a reformist cleric, Muhammad Khatami, won the election in a landslide after the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, openly endorsed Khatami's conservative opponent...The undeniable and serious flaws in their country's electoral process have not prevented Iranians from learning about democratic practices and internalizing democracy-friendly values. Indeed, the debate over democracy has been near the heart of Iranian politics for a decade now.

—*Shia Revival*, Vali Nasr²²

Political growth. Politically, the IRI has made many remarkable changes. In constructing its unique political system, Iran has combined many Western ideals, institutions, and values with indigenous political concepts. The result, one rarely acknowledged by U.S. policy makers and Western media, is that Iran's political system works. Even though candidates for office must be approved by the Guardian Council, the political system is stable and elections are competitive. The Guardian Council notwithstanding, Iran is not, as many Americans think, an unsophisticated theocracy. The Majlis is a surprisingly freewheeling body that openly and hotly debates a wide range of political issues, including nationalization of industry versus privatization, threats posed by the U.S. and Al-Qaeda, and even rapprochement with the U.S. Moreover, the pendulum in the Majlis swings between a clearly recognizable left and right. In fact, elections have so far produced two very different presidents, one a progressive reformer (Muhammad Khatami, 1997-2005), the other a hard-line conservative (Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, 2005 to the present).

The current system works in large part because of a collective willingness to cooperate: Iran's lawmakers have a strong sense of national identity not often found in the Middle East. In the Majlis, representatives of Iran's culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse population have generally learned how to balance their own parochial concerns with those that serve the national interest.

The Majlis may not enjoy all the constitutional prerogatives and authority that its American and European counterparts do, but it is not the rubber-stamp committee that once served the Shah. Besides serving as a forum for genuine debate, it exercises a measure of real authority over the development of law (even though its legislation is still subject to veto by the supreme leader or the Guardian Council). Additionally, executive political power in Islamic Iran is more decentralized than it was in the Shah's day, when the monarch held all power. In another democratic improvement, Iran has incorporated the American "checks and balances" principle into its system by spreading decision-making authority among diverse policy-making bodies, including among the clerics.²³

Even in its current, still-early stage of development, the Iranian system offers better democratic representation than any other comparable system or

legislative body in the Islamic Middle East.²⁴ No such open parliament can be found anywhere else in the Persian Gulf and the Caspian Sea regions, not even among such advanced states and staunch U.S. allies as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait.²⁵

With some modifications, Iran's political system could serve as a model for the development of other regional democratic institutions. The U.S., which has declared that it supports the development of democratic institutions in the Middle East, should take note and strongly support Iran's progress even if it does not specifically mirror Western models.

Military development. Like its government, Iran's military machine has evolved significantly since the early days of the revolution, when it still depended almost entirely on the U.S. for hardware, parts, supplies, technology, and advisors. After Iraq invaded in 1980, the Iranian military was so disorganized that it could not even find the tires for its F-4s, F-5s, and F-14s, or the tracks for its American-made tanks—they were lost in the supply system.²⁶ Chaos reigned in the services, mainly because the new regime had purged the U.S.-trained regular forces of anybody whose loyalty was even remotely suspect, and had then established a parallel force called the Pasdaran, or Revolutionary Guard (RG).

The IRI's original plan was to duplicate the functions of the old regular force, then demobilize it when the RG was ready. But because the latter had not had sufficient time to develop when Iraq crossed the border, the new government decided to keep the Shah's old military more or less intact.



AFP PHOTO/FARS NEWS/STR

Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard special forces participate in military maneuvers near the Persian Gulf, 3 April 2006.

Officers who had survived the revolution only to be jailed were freed (especially U.S.-trained pilots) to exonerate themselves through service. Ironically, Iraq's invasion gave new life—often literally—to the old Iranian military.

When the war ended in 1988, the IRI decided to retain both its regular and RG units. This double structure has led to what some regard as a sense of healthy competition between the two, fostering excellence. It also allows the regime to play off one arm against the other, a balancing strategy that gives the government tighter control of the military while assuring the loyalty of all military units.²⁷ In fact, this balancing act has given Iranian civilian leaders more power over their military than their Turkish counterparts have had over theirs. (The Turkish military has a pattern of intervening in Turkish politics.) That said, the RG's capture of 15 British sailors on 23 March 2007 suggests that the RG might be moving from its traditional role of policy implementer to policy formulator.

Saddam's invasion also forced Iran to speed up development of its own military-industrial capacity, a necessity caused by the U.S.'s refusal to provide spare parts to Iran. (Post-revolution, Iran has faced an American containment strategy that seriously restricts access to new technology, especially dual-use technology, and sources of armament.) Initially, the services tried to maintain their American-made equipment by cannibalizing some systems and by buying needed spare parts from countries like Vietnam, which had inherited a lot of American equipment after its war with the U.S.

Eventually, Iran was forced to begin manufacturing many parts. The next stage of development was to reverse-engineer both parts and equipment, an effort that created a new sense of national self-reliance and ingenuity. With hard work and persistence, the new attitude laid the foundation for an Iranian military-industrial complex able to produce a variety of materiel. The war had taught the IRI a major lesson: to protect its revolution, Iran had to maximize self-reliance and minimize dependence on foreign military equipment and technology.

Since then, one important indicator of Iran's ascendancy as a regional power has been its expansion of a substantial industrial base capable of supporting the development of a sophisticated military capability. In fact, the new military-indus-

trial complex is perhaps the most impressive sign of IRI growth, not least because it has given the country a large measure of independence from the international community. Furthermore, a new generation of engineering students (studying at home and abroad) has enabled the Islamic Republic to narrow the quality gap between Iranian and Western military technology and equipment. This improvement became apparent in July 2006, when Hezbollah nearly sank an Israeli warship in the Mediterranean using Iranian missiles.

Iran's relatively well developed military-industrial capability has poked a large hole in the U.S.'s containment strategy. It is now difficult, if not impossible, for any surgical strike to totally destroy such a capability. Iran's defense industry is now so dispersed and well protected that the most sophisticated U.S. bombing campaign could only temporarily delay any weapons program the U.S. deemed illegitimate.

Notwithstanding the gains its military has made, revolutionary Iran does not view itself as a direct military threat to America.²⁸ The media might tout the strength of conventional Iranian arms, but the IRI leadership knows that the U.S. has the best equipped, most professional military machine in the world, and that its own ability to deal with an all-out U.S. challenge is relatively limited. Still, Iran sees itself as having a formidable and increasingly capable force that would inflict a heavy price on any invading power, especially since its soldiers would be defending their own country on rough terrain very conducive to defense.

Nuclear capability. Having greatly improved its military might and gained a significant degree of autonomy, Iran now feels both justified and confident enough in its own capabilities to pursue homegrown nuclear technology. The same principle of self-reliant independence has marked this pursuit. Iran has taken smart steps to defend its facilities from outside attack, and its development program, unlike Iraq's in the early 80s and Libya's in the 90s, has mostly eschewed imported technology. Thus, the Iranian nuclear program is less vulnerable to an air raid like the one on Osirac (1981), in which Israel practically ended Baghdad's nuclear bid. Whereas Iraq's program was highly centralized and could be smashed with one big blow, Iran's is divided into many smaller projects dispersed over 50 heavily guarded, well-fortified locations throughout the country.

On the technical side, Iran's nuclear program might not be as sophisticated as those in the West, but it has made remarkable strides. For example, Tehran was able to produce yellow cake on its own, an accomplishment it showcased theatrically in 2006. Overall, the IRI is nearing a nuclear capability, one it has developed more or less independently.

U.S. policy makers recently appeared to acknowledge that limited attacks on Iran's nuclear centers would be extremely challenging and probably unsuccessful at ending Iran's nuclear aspirations. Diplomacy seems to be the only tenable solution, a position that President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice have emphasized, at least nominally.

Golden Rule #3. The third and final Golden Rule of "national biology" is that a mature, thriving state will seek to reproduce itself. The rationale here is that states feel more secure in an environment filled with similar states governed by similar principles. When President Woodrow Wilson declared, "Let us make the world safe for democracy," he most likely meant a world safe for American-style democracy. In his view, the way to make the world safe was to increase the number of nations governed by similar political orders, especially those characteristic of the U.S. and Western Europe.

Although democracy has had great appeal since its inception, history shows that when the early Americans declared independence, they established a revolutionary state whose democratic ideals were perceived as dangerous by most European monarchies. In fact, even some of the founding fathers were not sure how democracy could operate in a manner that was not merely mob rule. Nevertheless, after more or less securing its own democracy (however imperfect) in the 19th century, the U.S. began to export such revolutionary concepts as popular sovereignty, representative government, separation of church and state, decentralization of power, checks and balances, and so on. At the time, it was one of the world's few democracies, but its form of government has since taken root in many places; these days, democracy is broadly viewed as a theoretically acceptable form of government whose establishment is often the goal of independence and revolutionary movements. As a result, two centuries after the American Revolution, the world seems at least somewhat safer for democracy.

Still, democracies constitute only a quarter of all countries. And moreover, to non-democratic

nations, democracy is still a radical idea, especially because it promotes such notions as legal and political equality, public accountability, and free and fair elections, all of which are foreign, atypical, and radical to societies with traditional one-man rule. In Iran, for example, the democratic notion of overall popular sovereignty is viewed as particularly threatening by the IRI's Islamic theocracy. For IRI leaders, Koranic law—as interpreted by the supreme leader and the Guardian Council—has sovereignty, not the people. Consequently, unchecked popular sovereignty is regarded as a threat to the very foundation of the IRI.

Therefore, we should not be surprised that Iran's leaders often feel threatened and under attack by the constant bombardment of ideas issuing from the U.S., whose values and ideals are popular among Iran's intellectuals and students.²⁹ The mullahs take this threat very seriously for several reasons: 75 percent of Iran's population is under 30 and attracted to Western ideas; many Iranian intellectuals were educated in the West; and many Iranians travel outside the country, have access to international media, and speak foreign languages, all of which bring them into contact with secular humanist values that tend to align themselves with support of popular sovereignty.

As regards its own "biological" inclination to reproduce, even Tehran has come to appreciate the limited appeal of its revolutionary message both inside and outside the region. How much of an ideological challenge, then, does the Iranian revolution pose to the status quo? The answer is "not much." It may have temporarily inspired underdog Shi'as throughout the region, but its fervor was relatively short-lived, and it has led to no real Shi'a political gains elsewhere. In yet another irony, the second largest Shi'a community in the world (Iraq) owes its ascendancy not to Iranian proselytizing, but to Washington's efforts to spread its own seed.³⁰ This is not to say that Iran is not trying to project power into Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries: it provides material assistance to Iraq's Shi'a parties and to Hezbollah in Lebanon.³¹ But such support does not necessarily translate into political influence. In fact, based on the comments of a number of RG officials, Iran has relatively little influence in Iraq, despite what American officials often assert to cover their own mistakes there.³²

Additionally, it practically goes without saying that Tehran's ideological message has virtually no appeal to Americans. It is certainly not the same kind of ideological threat to democracy and its economic corollary, capitalism, that Marxism was when the devastation wrought by the Great Depression in the 1920s and 1930s and by World War II in the 1940s called into question the ideological underpinnings of Western democracy and capitalism.

In summary, Iran has had very little success with the third Golden Rule. Three decades after its revolution, it has not succeeded in fostering another Islamic republic in its own image anywhere; to the contrary, the infatuation that regional Shi'a communities had for Iranian-style government is running thin. Azerbaijan, a Shi'a majority state, has expressed its distaste for an Islamic regime and cooperates closely with secular Turkey and the West, especially the U.S. Also, Shi'a communities in Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and elsewhere are working with their Sunni-dominated regimes to gain greater domestic political and economic opportunities.³³

Relearning the Tango

Having touched upon the essential contentious issues of U.S./Iranian history and briefly analyzed the Iranian leadership's point of view through the prism of the Golden Rules to help explain the IRI's past and current behavior, it is time to consider a few principles that may be useful for the U.S. in developing a new approach to Iran.

According to Washington, the major obstacle to dealing with Iran has been the resistance of Iranian leaders to considering a dramatic shift in bilateral relations. From the Iranian perspective, that view is simply not true—Tehran has had several leaders who were quite willing to begin efforts at rapprochement with Washington, if American leaders had been willing to listen to and respect Iranian views. For Tehran, the U.S. expectation that such talks cannot take place until there is firm prospect of immediate progress is simplistic and impractical, considering the nature, duration, and complexity of relations between the two.

Many IRI leaders have also noted that when opportunities have presented themselves for possible engagement, Washington has made no real overtures toward the Iranian leadership—not even when small gestures of cooperation might have led

to more extensive interaction. Historically, such measures succeeded in getting the traditionally hostile Germans and French to sign the 1957 Treaty of Rome, a document pledging them to full-fledged partnership. Iran's leaders wonder aloud why Washington has forsworn such engagement with Iran.

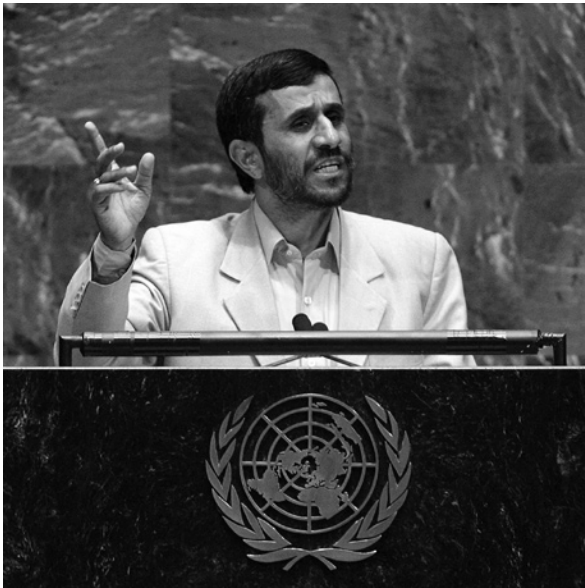
For example, in August 2006, IRI officials were puzzled by mixed American diplomatic signals. At the International Society of Iranian Studies conference, the U.S. expressed disappointment over the prospect of improving U.S.-Iran relations in the wake of President Ahmadinejad's election. One U.S. participant lamented that some Washington policy corners had been hoping for the emergence of a moderate Iranian leader who could jump-start negotiations. Immediately, an exasperated Iranian official replied that former President Khatami, known for his moderate stand, had sent numerous positive signals to Washington during his two 4-year terms in office, all of which were either ignored outright or obstructed by U.S. insistence on setting preconditions for negotiations. The Iranian official observed that, having been so shortsighted and obtuse, Washington deserved Ahmadinejad and whatever angst it felt for having jettisoned so casually such golden opportunities.³⁴

Recently, another IRI official observed that even the hardliner Ahmadinejad had sent positive signals to President Bush, among them an 18-page letter in spring 2006, a speech at the UN, and interviews



Secretary-General Kofi Annan is greeted by the former president of Iran Muhammad Khatami, prior to a closed session of the High-Level Group of the Alliance of Civilizations, in Doha, Qatar, 26 February 2006.

UN Photo/Mark Garten



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, addresses the general debate of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly at UN Headquarters in New York, 19 September 2006.

with Diane Sawyer and other senior American correspondents.³⁵ True to form, Washington ignored Ahmadinejad's letter and laid down preconditions to any direct negotiations. Basically, many Iranian leaders have observed that the U.S. has chosen to outsource its foreign policy toward Iran through the "EU 3" (England, France, Germany), which naturally pursue their own strategic and policy priorities first in talks and negotiations.

Besides losing several chances to negotiate with the IRI's leaders, Washington has proven obdurate in other spheres that could have opened the door to normalized relations. In the mid-1990s, Iran and Conoco/Phillips reached a major cooperative agreement about oil and gas operations in the Persian Gulf. Instead of promoting the agreement as an entrée to talks with the IRI, the Clinton administration suddenly pulled the plug on the deal. Another major opportunity appeared immediately after September 11th, when the Iranian people held their candlelight vigils to show solidarity with the American people. Any slight expression of gratitude by the U.S. Government might have thawed the ice between Tehran and Washington, but only a few Americans even acknowledged the Iranian gesture.³⁶

Later in 2001, during its campaign against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, Washington ignored perhaps its greatest opportunity to

A grassroots outpouring of sympathy for the victims of September 11 occurred on the streets in only two places in the Muslim world, both within days of the collapse of the twin towers and both among the Shia. The first was in Iran, where tens of thousands snubbed their government to go into the streets of Tehran and hold a candlelight vigil in solidarity with the victims of the attacks. The second was in Karachi, where a local party that is closely associated with the city's Shia broke with public mood in Pakistan to gather thousands to denounce terrorism.

—*Shia Revival*, Vali Nasr³⁷

open channels with Tehran. Like the U.S., Iran, too, backed the Northern Alliance against the Taliban–Al-Qaeda axis (the real axis of evil in the Iranian view), and early on there were many tactical contacts between U.S. and IRI officials and forces to coordinate efforts—Tehran even allowed some U.S. planes to use its airspace. After the Taliban was defeated, IRI representatives attended the international donors' meeting and contributed very constructively to the Afghan reconstruction effort. Moreover, Iran's border with Afghanistan has been very peaceful since the Taliban fell.³⁸

These developments suggest that Tehran and Washington were de facto strategic allies in 2001. But Washington failed to build on the precedent. Quite the opposite occurred: soon after Afghan President Hamid Karzai was elected, the U.S. dissuaded him from seeking closer ties with Iran. This has forced Karzai to walk a tightrope between the U.S. and his next-door neighbor and former ally. Nevertheless, Tehran, according to Karzai, is playing a constructive role in Afghanistan, and their relations are cordial.³⁹ To be sure, as a prelude to engagement, the U.S. must learn to acknowledge that Iran has undeniably legitimate interests in the internal affairs of its neighbors, just as the U.S. has legitimate interests in what happens internally in Haiti, Cuba, Mexico, or Canada. Tehran, for example, is legitimately concerned about the increase in opium production in Afghanistan, which leads to drug smuggling from Afghanistan to Iran. Not only does the drug trade destabilize areas along Iran's

border with Afghanistan, but also opium addiction in Iran has increased alarmingly, despite the severe punishment meted out to smugglers and drug dealers. This issue is leading to more cooperation (not conflict) between the two neighbors.

Most recently, the Iraq war has spawned another great chance to begin Iran-U.S. rapprochement. At the commencement of the conflict, IRI leaders, worried about possible consequences resulting from Saddam's quick collapse, approached Washington in the spring and summer of 2003. Again, however, the U.S. declined to talk.⁴⁰ Ironically, because no weapons of mass destruction were found in Iraq—the original justification for his decision to invade—President Bush has subsequently been forced to promote Iraq's potential as a role model for democracy in the Middle East. Thus, in retrospect, his decision to spurn Iran, the only Islamic nation in the Middle East with anything approaching a working democracy, looks to have been tragically shortsighted.

Moreover, as the situation in Iraq has gradually devolved into what some term an American quagmire, the dynamic of the U.S.-Iran relationship has changed. Because of Iran's close proximity to Iraq and close cultural ties with Iraq's Shi'a majority, the relationship has gone from one benefiting Washington to one favoring Tehran. Looking to its own interests beyond the nuclear crisis and President Ahmadinejad's inflammatory remarks, the U.S. should recognize the need to dramatically change its approach to Iran. Washington can wish upon a star for the rise of a moderate Iranian leader who might slavishly support its efforts in Iraq, but the hard facts of history clearly show that U.S. leaders failed to respond to repeated previous openings by Iranian leaders who, had they been treated with respect, might have become welcome partners, not antagonists, in resolving the Iraq crisis.

Moving forward, President Bush should learn from the errors of his predecessors, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton. These men asked Iran for more accommodating gestures than they themselves were willing to give—even as they constricted all regular channels with Tehran. This unconstructive and hegemonic diplomacy led to the current situation in which the U.S. now has no direct political leverage over Iran except with military threats and by promoting international sanctions. As a result, forcing a change in Iranian behavior through

sanctions or direct military action has been discussed widely in Washington, London, and Tel Aviv.

The Nuclear Crisis Redux

In addressing the nuclear crisis, Secretary of State Rice has stated that there are both incentives and sanctions for Iran—the choice is Iran's. However, this rhetoric has always been accompanied by undisguised threats, such as President Bush's insistence that "all options"—to include the military one—"are open." Vice President Dick Cheney has been even more bellicose, repeatedly calling for regime change in Iran. Here it is important to emphasize that there is a major difference between the current Iranian leadership's situation and that of the deposed Shah. Despite his negative public image, the Shah had many options for asylum when he left Iraq: several countries acknowledged that they would accept him. In contrast, the IRI's leaders do not have such options, because no other country in the world would likely grant them asylum. Therefore, Cheney's threats are particularly personal and have effectively forced leaders of the regime to dig in their heels. As true believers in the revolution, and having nowhere else to go, they will naturally fight to the finish to save Iran's revolution and themselves with it.

The military option. Although Bush has recently been emphasizing diplomacy to resolve his differences with Tehran over its nuclear program, he has clearly indicated that military force against Iran is a viable option.⁴¹ With regard to such an option, despite setbacks in Iraq, there is little doubt that America's well-equipped and well-trained forces can and will dominate almost any conventional battlefield in the world. However, as the war in Iraq has also tragically demonstrated, winning battles is one thing, but securing victory, especially in a political war fought in the streets among an occupied people, can be something completely different.

After four years of fighting in which nearly 3,600 U.S. Soldiers, 7,000 Iraqi Security Force members, and perhaps 65,000 Iraqi civilians have died, the U.S. really controls only the International Green Zone, the 10 or so square kilometers in downtown Baghdad that contain the U.S. Embassy and the Iraqi seat of government—and even the Green Zone is attacked daily by mortar and rocket fire.⁴² The fact is that neither the U.S. nor the Iraqi Government that

it sponsors currently controls Iraq's streets, except temporarily and with a heavy show of force such as occurred during Senator John McCain's April 2007 walk through a Baghdad market. It should be noted that the difficulties the U.S.-led coalition has encountered have occurred in Baghdad and the Sunni Triangle, where the terrain is mostly flat and should be relatively easy to control.

In contrast, defeating Iran would be many degrees harder. To begin with, Iran is four times larger than Iraq, with three times as many people. Just occupying Iran would require a force much larger than the one the U.S. used against Saddam. Where would the additional forces come from, and what would happen in Iraq when the U.S. forces deployed to Iran? Also, to reach Tehran, U.S. forces would have to negotiate a vast expanse of terrain characterized by tall mountains, deep valleys, and high, dry deserts. Tehran, with 10 million people, would be an urban combat nightmare when compared to the much smaller Baghdad. In the present circumstances, is the military option of invading and occupying Iran really a viable one for the United States?

The other frequently discussed military option involves so-called surgical strikes by bombers or missiles against suspected nuclear facilities in Tehran, Natanz, Isfahan, and elsewhere. As noted earlier, though, these strikes would face some serious challenges. Iran's nuclear program is dispersed among at least 50 cities in deep, hardened bunkers on heavily guarded facilities. And, because the nuclear program is mostly homegrown, Iran has the indigenous ability to reconstitute any of the program's key parts should there be a successful attack against a facility.

There are other factors to consider, too. For one, history shows that even the most successful aerial bombardment almost always produces innocent casualties, thereby triggering near-automatic national outrage and international condemnation. This should be a key factor in calculating the total risks of executing so-called surgical attacks because, surprisingly to some, the great majority of Iranians actually admire the U.S. (Iran is arguably the least anti-American country in the Persian Gulf.) Would Washington want to risk permanently alienating the entire Iranian population by conducting military attacks which have a minimal probability of success? In addition, President Ahmadinejad has

succeeded in making the nuclear issue a matter of national sovereignty and pride. No matter how successful a strike is, neither of these will be destroyed; in fact, an attack could easily foster greater support for Ahmadinejad and stoke a nationalistic determination to defy the U.S. by increasing efforts to develop nuclear weapons.

The bottom line is that the chance of eliminating Iran's nuclear capability by some kind of surgical strike is, at best, very slim. Moreover, even if such attacks were to succeed, they would only delay Iran's nuclear bid, not end it.

Clearly, previous American-led economic, military, and political sanctions against the IRI have succeeded in only one thing: they have diminished any economic, technical, and political leverage that the U.S. might have had over Iran. Having isolated Iran and forced it to operate independently, American policy makers now have no effective options except the most draconian for altering Iranian behavior.

In contrast to the U.S., and despite challenges in its own relationship with Iran, the European Union has chosen to carry on "the Dialogue" with Tehran. As a result, it has had significantly more success than the U.S. in gaining concessions and agreements on issues of mutual interest. Still, the Europeans cannot offer the kind of security relationship that the Islamic Republic wants, especially in the Gulf and Caspian Sea areas; only the world's single superpower can do that. Thus, while the U.S. might not have the heavy-handed leverage it wants over Iran, it does have something that Tehran wants. To strike a deal, though, the U.S. will have to agree to negotiate on an equal basis, without any preconditions.

Future Prospects, Current Prescriptions

So far, this discussion of U.S.-Iranian relations has been pretty gloomy. The prospects for the future, however, are not really so depressing. Are Iran and the U.S. on a collision course? Not necessarily, since each side has many cards yet to play.

As mentioned earlier, the greatest impediment to improved relations between the two nations is not necessarily Iran's pursuit of nuclear power, as Washington's countenancing of Pakistan's program suggests. Rather, the main problem is that the U.S. doesn't understand the leadership, government, and society that have developed in Iran since the 1979

revolution. Lacking familiarity, U.S. policy makers are in the dark about Tehran's true intentions, and being in the dark, they assume the worst.

It is broadly understood that the best way to gauge intentions is to interact extensively with the opposing side. Unfortunately, the U.S. has long relied on technology to answer its intelligence questions. Satellite imagery, computer models, airborne eavesdropping, and similar means of high-tech data collection cannot even give us a clear picture of the other side's capabilities (for example, Iraqi weapons of mass destruction or Iranian nuclear technology), much less divine the human intentions behind those capabilities. The logical resolution to the U.S.-Iran's impasse is for U.S. leaders to engage with Iran leaders person to person. Toward that end, there are several meaningful steps Washington could take.

Practice listening. To lay the groundwork for effective approaches, U.S. leaders first need to understand why the IRI operates as it does; and to do this, they must respect Iran's leaders at least enough to consider that their motives might issue from something other than what President Bush's speechwriter simplistically interpreted as "evil." Moving from dogmatic assertion to pragmatic analysis will take political courage, but doing so is vital if the U.S. is to properly assess Iran's intentions—nuclear or otherwise.

Unfortunately, many American leaders have made the Iranian challenge even more formidable by listening only to those who tell them what they want to hear. For example, U.S. leaders still tend to publicly depict Iran as seething with a revolutionary fervor that threatens to spill out over the Middle East and the world, and that has only been held in check by Western containment policies. But those who truly listen and observe know that Iran's revolutionary message is and always has been exclusively relevant to Shi'a Muslims—and is naturally contained because the Middle East is predominantly Sunni and the Shi'a message has little general appeal to the rest of the world. Moreover, if U.S. leaders had listened to those with networks of personal contacts in Iran, they would have learned that revolutionary fervor has waned dramatically among the majority of Iranian citizens and even among many of the mullahs, who have long been more focused on finding pragmatic solutions to the domestic problems facing Iranian society.

Unfortunately, the U.S. continues to display a consistent pattern of diplomatic obtuseness and disrespect toward Iran, with U.S. leaders petulantly refusing to listen to what Iranian leaders have to say. Washington snubs direct discussion with Tehran, relying only on diplomatic third parties for mediations. It dismisses Tehran's messages because they are too long, but then regards diplomatic signals as meaningless or misguided.

Because the U.S. will not communicate with Iran, it depends mainly on high-tech information collection for the bulk of information it uses to "understand" its counterpart. But to actually comprehend Iranian perspectives, fears, and intentions, the U.S. will have to greatly deemphasize its reliance on high-tech surveillance and collection and return to human-to-human engagement. Contrary to its largely unjustified faith in technology's ability to solve essentially human relations problems, the U.S. will not be able to deal effectively with the IRI challenge by poring over sophisticated satellite pictures, by depending on computer models, or by relying on other electronic means of collection. High-tech data-gathering tools merely show, at best, other technical capabilities while telling us nothing at all about the real human intention behind such capabilities. Even the most sophisticated technology is no substitute for good old-fashioned human-to-human contact and the information and relevant insights that are gleaned by such contact.

That U.S. faith in high-tech approaches to developing strategic intelligence is badly misplaced should already be obvious, thanks to several recent experiences in which policy makers were seriously misled about other nations' intentions and capabilities. For example, massive technological surveillance did not help the U.S. foresee the collapse of the Soviet Union, failed to reveal the true extent of Indian nuclear weapons technology development until a weapon was actually tested, and did not preclude the U.S. Government from grossly overestimating the likelihood of Saddam Hussein actually possessing and using weapons of mass destruction. Even at this writing, no one in the high-tech collection business can provide U.S. policy makers with an absolutely reliable answer as to whether North Korea did or did not detonate a nuclear weapon—though the assumption that it did sent shudders through the corridors of power in Washington which continue to reverberate.

Despite numerous such examples illustrating how an over-reliance on high-tech information collection can produce serious, and in some cases tragic, foreign policy, successive U.S. leaders and their administrations have depended principally on technology for insight into the intentions and mind-set of Iran. They have failed to leverage human collection capabilities and have not taken advantage of opportunities provided by regional or global developments. One major adverse consequence of this policy approach is that Iranian intentions remain a mystery to the U.S. administration.

Seek opportunities to engage. Had Washington taken a more commonsensical approach and engaged Tehran earlier, the two governments might now be sharing mutual regional security concerns. Such engagement may have precluded the current nuclear standoff. But instead, Iranian policies are issues of concern for the U.S. The essential question is, How do those who have concern about Iranian actions get Iran to change its objectives and behavior?

Washington policy makers need to reverse their approach by inviting the IRI's leaders to sit down and discuss the issues confronting them, especially those that seem to be impelling the U.S. and Iran toward a preventable war. No doubt some irreconcilable differences would remain, but if U.S. leaders were to deal directly and respectfully with Iran, they would be more likely to understand the justifications for Iran's policies and could then work toward viable solutions.

The two nations have common interests. Regional security is probably the most pressing of these. The U.S. needs to open a dialogue with Iran regarding American security guarantees that would benefit both parties. In the short run, this might lead to broader cooperation on Iraq and an agreement to clamp down on terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda. But in the long run, it could serve as a means of influencing demographic, economic, and political developments in Iran, where an overwhelmingly young population with access to the Internet, satellite TV, and Hollywood productions can be easily influenced by subtle pro-Western ideals and messages about the globalization process.

Another common interest is trade. Iran is a major exporter of oil to the industrial societies of the West and a potential major consumer of U.S. products. Less tension in the region would translate into

The Islamic revolution is today a spent force in Iran, and the Islamic Republic is a tired dictatorship facing pressures to change. The victory of hard-line candidate Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in the 2005 presidential election cannot conceal the reality that grassroots concerns about democracy and economic reform are the key defining factors in Iranian politics as a whole today. Iranian society often appears to be gripped by contradictions: a theocracy coexists with limited democratic practices; a secularized middle-class youth culture shares the public sphere with a sizable share of the populace that still puts its trust in Khomeini and his legacy. Daily newspapers run full-page discussions of debates between French philosophers over the meaning of "postmodernist discourse," yet the country continues to languish under the Islamic Republic. The pull of modernity and reformism is strong, but so is that of tradition and conservatism. Despite the influence of the latter two forces, however, Iran more than any other society in the Muslim world is a place where fundamentals are under scrutiny and open to questioning and new thinking.

—*Shia Revival*, Vali Nasr⁴³

cheaper energy bills for the American citizen. On the other side, Iranians have a real appetite for U.S. products. American industries can directly benefit from exporting non-military items to an Iranian market of 75 million consumers. Exchanges of this kind inevitably lead to interdependence that evolves into vested mutual interests, giving both parties a reason to maintain their relationship.

In addition to security and trade, restoring contact in the educational, technological, and military fields should be considered based on the mutual benefits derived from such engagements.

Conduct role-playing exercises. Finally, a good way to gain knowledge of Iran and promote better relations with its leaders would be to conduct high-level role-playing exercises involving representatives of both governments. The best way to understand the behavior of others is to determine what others see, how

they see it, and how they might respond to what they see based on their perceived interests. Role-playing exercises can facilitate all of this. Done honestly and accurately, and with consideration given to the basic principles of the Golden Rules, they can contribute significantly to an understanding of each other's concerns and national aspirations.

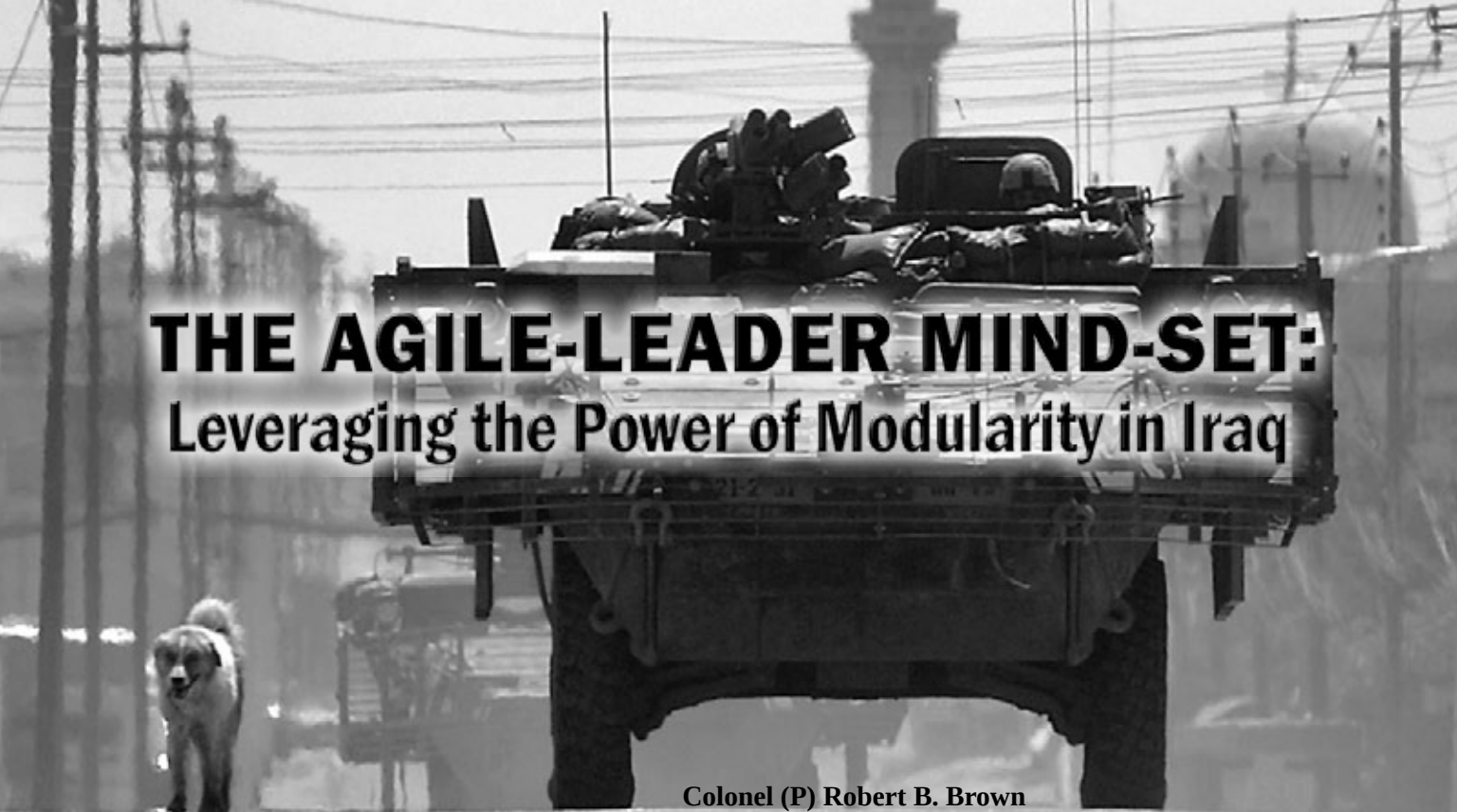
In the end, whether it happens by role-playing, or through incremental exchanges of contacts, or

even as the result of some dramatic breakthrough similar to Nixon's visit to China, an improved U.S.-IRI relationship would greatly lessen the tension in the world. It could shorten the conflict in Iraq, keep both sides from precipitating a debacle in Iran, and perhaps prevent an all-out conflagration in the Middle East and Europe. The possible payoffs are enormous; the outlay—listen, respect, reconsider, engage—a relative pittance. **MR**

NOTES

1. Ali Asghar Soltanieh (Iranian Representative to IAEA), "Iranian Nuclear Activities & International Policies (in Farsi)," *Journal of Foreign Policy* (Iranian Foreign Ministry) 19 (Fall & Winter 2006): 609-28.
2. See Amir Hossein Hosseini (Policy Analyst at The Institute for Political & International Studies), "Current U.S. Strategy on Confronting WMD & Iran's Nuclear Program (in Farsi)," *Journal of Foreign Policy* (Iranian Foreign Ministry) 19 (fall & winter 2006): 493-538; see also Seyed Hossein Sadat Meydani (Policy Analyst at Iranian Foreign Ministry), "The Security Council & Iran's Nuclear Case: Governance of International Law in Confrontation with International Peace (in Farsi)," *Journal of Foreign Policy* (Iranian Foreign Ministry) (spring 2006): 1-31.
3. Anonymous Revolutionary Guard officer, conversation with author, August 2006, Tehran.
4. On this topic, see Jo-Anne Hart, "Perceptions and Courses of Actions toward Iran," *Military Review* (September-October 2005): 9-21.
5. The Iranian perspectives presented here are the results of a series of informal conversations, interviews, and discussions the author held with Iranian officials and scholars both inside and outside the country, mainly since 2000. They wish to remain anonymous.
6. See Houman A. Sadri, *Revolutionary States: Leaders and Foreign Relations* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997) and see also R.K. Ramazani, *The Foreign Policy of Iran 1500-1941* (Charlottesville, VA: The University Press of Virginia, 1966).
7. William Morgan Shuster American lawyer, civil servant, and publisher, is best known as the treasurer-general of Persia by appointment of the Iranian parliament, or Majlis, from May to December 1911. Shuster was forced out of Persia by Britain and Russia, and returned to the United States to write *The Strangling of Persia*, a scathing indictment of Russian and British meddling in the affairs of Persia.
8. For an extensive analysis of repression during the Shah era, see Reza Baraheni, *The Crowned Cannibals: Writings on Repression in Iran* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).
9. Iranian students and immigrants to the U.S. in the 1970s and early 1980s, interviews by author, 1981-83, Los Angeles, CA, and Washington, D.C.
10. Sepehr Zabih, *The Mossadegh Era: Roots of the Iranian Revolution* (Chicago: Lake View Press, 1982).
11. For accurate and comprehensive views of Ayatollah Khomeini, see *Shah-e-Nur* (in Farsi), 19 volumes, (Tehran) Sazman Madarik Farhangi Inqilab Islami Vabastah Bih Vizarat Farhang va Irshad Islami, 1986.
12. Anonymous member of Iranian President Mehdi Bazargan's cabinet, interview by author, 1985, Tehran.
13. See "List of Attacks on U.S. Embassies" *International Herald Tribune*, 19 May 2007, <www.ihl.com/articles/ap/2007/05/19/americana/NA-GEN-U.S.-Embassy-Attacks.php>.
14. Author, private conversation with five Pasdaran (Revolutionary Guard) officers, summer 2003, Bandar Abbas and Abadan on the Persian Gulf coast. For corroboration, see George C. Wilson, "Navy Missile Downs Iranian Jetliner," *Washington Post*, 4 July 1988, A01, <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/flight801/stories/july88crash.htm>.
15. For pragmatic signals of this group of leaders even during the first decade of IRI, see *Dar Maktab-e Jome'h* (in Farsi), 4 Volumes, (Tehran: Ministry of Islamic Guidance, summer 1988).
16. The author has seen such public symbols in Tehran, Isfahan, and Khoram-shahr, to name a few cities.
17. From a political culture perspective, Iranian literature has many such epic stories in Poet Ferdosi's masterpiece work, *Shahnameh*.
18. Houman A. Sadri, "An Islamic Perspective of Non-Alignment," *Journal of Third World Studies* 16, no. 2 (fall 1999). See also Sadri, "Non-Alignment as a Foreign Policy Strategy: Dead or Alive," *Mediterranean Quarterly* (spring 1999).
19. Anonymous former member of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan's cabinet, interview by author, 1993, Tehran. Interestingly enough, the interviewee mainly emphasized the cultural and historical (as opposed to religious) dimensions of Iran's anti-hegemonic stand.
20. See Paul Kennedy, *The Rise & Fall of the Great Powers* (New York: Random House, 1987).
21. An Iranian merchant and former Ministry of Trade official commented in an interview with me that the 6 percent growth rate is a major improvement over the early days of the Islamic Revolution, when the growth rate was negative. Interviewee wished to remain anonymous, interview by author, 1999 and 2005, Beverly Hills, California.
22. Vali Nasr, *Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), 180.

23. In another of the Beverly Hills interviews (note 21), a Majlis member suggested to me that revolutionary Iran had borrowed a number of American democracy principles, including the notion of checks and balances and decentralization of power.
24. Bahman Baktiar, *Parliamentary Politics in Revolutionary Iran* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 1996).
25. Claim based on three interviews conducted in Kuwait with a Kuwaiti National Assembly Representative, Dr. Hasan Johar, in May 2001, October 2002, and February 2003. Dr. Johar claimed that Kuwait had the only Parliament among Arab states of the Gulf and one of the most open parliaments in the entire Arab world. However, even the Kuwaiti Assembly is not as effective as its Iranian counterpart.
26. Assertions based on comments by former Iranian military personnel in the regular army and air force, 1997, 1999, and 2001, Tehran. Conversations with some former Iranian military officials who immigrated to the U.S. have confirmed the above comments.
27. Anonymous regular and revolutionary military leaders, interviews and conversations with author, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, and 2006, Tehran, Isfahan, and Ahvaz.
28. According to its constitution, the IRI cannot initiate aggressive behavior, although it reserves the right to support oppressed people anywhere in the world. These comments are based on the author's interview with a retired Iranian judge, July 1997, near Los Angeles, CA.
29. Claim based on conversations and discussions with scholars at the Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS), a think tank associated with the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran, 2001, 2003, and 2006.
30. Author's conversations with scholars from the University of Tehran and University of Shahid Beheshti, February 2003 and August 2006.
31. For instance, Ray Takeyh argues that Iran naturally projects its power in the region and that the U.S. needs to consider such factors in its policy calculations. See Ray Takeyh, "Iran: Détente, Not Regime Change," *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2007): 17-28.
32. Conversations with a few Pasdaran officials in Tehran, Isfahan, and Ahvaz, July 2006.
33. Based on author's conversations with Professor Mehdi Al Salman, 2003, Kuwait.
34. Comment made at "The Sixth Biennial of Iranian Studies," an international conference for Iranian affairs experts organized by the International Society of Iranian Studies, 3-5 August 2006, School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS), London School of Economics, London, UK.
35. Comments made to the author at a reception honoring Ambassador Muhammad Javad Zarif, the new Iranian Ambassador to the UN, January 2007.
36. Hart, 9.
37. Nasr, 251.
38. This is a major change, since tension was usually high on the border during Taliban rule. In fact, after the Taliban captured Herat in September 1998 and executed nine Iranian diplomats and a journalist at the Iranian Consulate, Iran almost declared war. Later, the tension subsided due to UN intervention. For a report, see <www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/news/1998/09/980914-afghan.htm>.
39. "Iran a Friendly, Brotherly Neighbor of Afghanistan: Karzai," *Beijing Times*, 25 February 2002, <http://english.people.com.cn/200202/25/eng20020225_90916.shtml>.
40. Based on conversations with Iranian diplomats in Arab Persian Gulf states, 2002-2003.
41. Iranian policy analysts consider "the U.S. Jewish lobby" and "the Christian right" as major sources of the American hawkish attitude toward Iran. For example, see Seyed Ali Tabatabaie, (Political Science Faculty, Free University of Tehran), "The U.S. Jewish Lobby, Instigators of Iran Sanctions (in Farsi)," *Journal of Foreign Policy* (Iranian Foreign Ministry) 20 (Spring 2006): 33-84. Also see: Mohammad Jamshidi (Political Science Senior Policy Analyst, Imam Sadegh University), "Christian Right & the U.S. Foreign Policy (in Farsi)," *Journal of Foreign Policy* (Iranian Foreign Ministry) 20 (Spring 2006): 85-121.
42. Iraq casualty counts for coalition forces and contractors can be found at <http://icasualties.org/oif>. The number of Iraqi civilian fatalities can be found at <www.iraqbodycount.org/database>. The statistic given in the article only includes media-reported civilian deaths that are related in some way to military action or response to such action (i.e. insurgent attacks). Not even the Green Zone is completely safe, as the 12 April 2007 bombing in the Iraqi Parliament cafeteria indicates. See "Suicide attack kills 8 in Iraqi parliament cafeteria," <www.cnn.com/2007/WORLD/meast/04/12/iraq.main/index.html>.
43. Nasr, 213.



THE AGILE-LEADER MIND-SET: Leveraging the Power of Modularity in Iraq

Colonel (P) Robert B. Brown

Truly successful decision making relies on a balance between deliberate and instinctive thinking.

—Malcolm Gladwell,
Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking, 2005¹

This article has been cleared for publication by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Office of Freedom of Information and Security Review, Washington Headquarters Services).

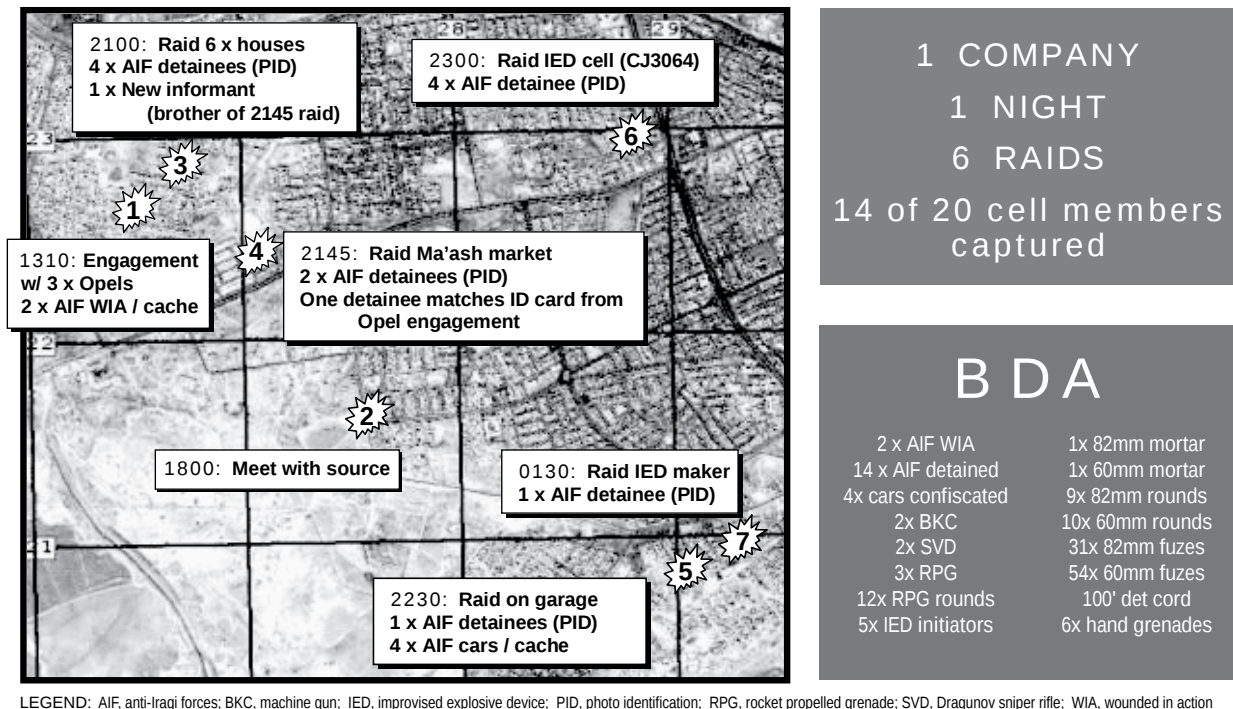
Colonel (P) Robert B. Brown commanded the 1st Stryker Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, in Iraq from September 2004 to September 2005. He is currently the director, J-7 (exercises and training), Pacific Command. COL Brown has a B.S. from the U.S. Military Academy and master's degrees from the University of Virginia and the National War College. He has served in a variety of staff and command assignments in the continental United States, Hawaii, Haiti, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Iraq.

PHOTO: 1-25 SBCT Strykers on patrol in Mosul, Iraq, spring 2005. (U.S. Army)

Insurgents in two cars sped through the heart of the crowded city of Mosul, Iraq, firing wildly at a U.S. Army patrol from Bravo Company, 1-24 Infantry. The patrol gave pursuit, but was unable to engage as the insurgents exited their vehicles, blending into a marketplace crowd that included women and children. Over the next six hours, the patrol's parent company would conduct six separate raids in a complex urban area with a population of over 2 million, capturing 14 of the 20 terrorist cell members involved in the shooting and uncovering significant amounts of explosives, weapons, and supplies.

OPERATIONS LIKE the one described above (see figure 1 below) are common in Iraq for a modular brigade that trains to develop agile and adaptive leaders in a climate that demands empowered decision-making at all levels. The ability to respond as these Soldiers did—to consistently demonstrate more agility than the enemy—requires leaders with an “agile-leader mind-set.” Developing such a mind-set requires extensive training. To acquire it, leaders must be empowered, and they must be able to quickly convert large amounts of information into actionable intelligence.

Over the last five years, warfighters have become reacquainted with the axiom that they need to be more agile than their enemy. We have revalidated and reemphasized the enduring value of issuing mission-type orders, empowering subordinates, and decentralizing planning and execution. Successful commanders have learned to exploit the power of information not by increasing centralized control of operations, but by decentralizing information flow so that those at the tip of the spear can access information directly and share it horizontally. Traditional walls between military and civilian stakeholders and between intelligence and operations have come



S U C C E S S =

- Train the agile-leader mind-set
- Force leaders to work at higher levels
- Focus training on the leaders and staff
- Train with all assets that will be used in combat
- Train in the most demanding and difficult situations

Figure 1. Agile and adaptive leaders—B/1-24 raids, 12 March 2005.

down as inclusive, rather than exclusive, thinking has permeated our leader ethos.

Without a doubt, the U.S. military is at a turning point in its history. We risk losing our status as the greatest military power in the world if we do not rapidly institutionalize fundamental changes in the way we train, fight, and lead. In short, we need to develop a force-wide agile-leader mind-set. This article will discuss how to cultivate that mind-set. At the same time, we will examine lessons learned over three-and-a-half years while transforming a traditional combat brigade into a modular brigade combat team (BCT) performing combat operations in Iraq. Because many former division assets (e.g., intelligence, lethal and nonlethal fires, and reach-back capabilities) are now at brigade level, the modular brigade design offers both challenges and opportunities. The lessons addressed here are primarily tactical in nature, but strategic and operational leaders must understand them to properly support the training and fighting of the modular brigades and to ensure future combat success.

What Has Changed

Warfare today bears little resemblance to warfare yesterday. In the past, we generally knew who we were up against: our enemies wore uniforms, fought according to a doctrine, and were for the most part willing to engage us on battlefields. All that has changed, and so have we. We have gone to the modular brigade design, with its much enhanced combat power and digital assets, a move that many have decried as hearkening back to conventional warfare, but that we are attempting to take advantage of to defeat a ruthless but ingenious enemy.

The enemy. We are facing a multifaceted enemy, one who does not follow the conventions of a nation-state or of a responsible non-state actor. This enemy adapts continuously to exploit our weaknesses, and he capitalizes on a variety of technological and media tools to influence target populations. The enemy uses the same information available to us, and his decentralized organizational structure and unconventional operations complicate our ability

to predict his actions. The result is a significantly tighter decision cycle than in previous conflicts. In fact, we can expect the enemy's decision cycle to become even more compact as he makes increasing use of information-age capabilities.

Information flow. In the past, leaders had problems obtaining enough information to make an informed decision, but today's warfighter has a wealth of information at his disposal, much of it near real time. Now the problem is being able to sort quickly and efficiently through overwhelming amounts of data to find the nuggets of critical information that lead to good decisions. At brigade and below, leaders now have the assets needed to make the types of decisions that were previously made one or two echelons higher. Because the modular brigade has an extensive digital capability, information flows into the brigade at an amazing rate. Furthermore, the brigade has the ability to reach back instantly to a host of locations and national-level assets to obtain information. As a result, BCT leaders at all levels have an unprecedented level of situational awareness.

The key to harnessing the power of information is developing an organizational climate that encourages *horizontal* information sharing in lieu of old-think *vertical* information sharing (figure 2). Horizontal information sharing among an ever-increasing number of contributing entities requires a cooperative organizational attitude that empowers subordinate decision-making. The brigade staff must ensure that it develops an effective battle rhythm that promotes information fusion meetings to share critical intelligence, targeting, and information requirements in a timely manner. Staffs and commanders must analyze collected information to determine its relevance and importance. Units must learn to save time and resources by focusing their efforts primarily on information needed for a particular decision or to divine enemy intentions or patterns.

Organizational barriers that slow the sharing of information both internally and with external organizations must be demolished or at least lowered. For example, we currently use an array of digital systems that are not completely interoperable with each other. The modular brigade must make every available digital system share information when needed; it must make a concerted effort to force interoperability. Legacy brigade systems such as FBCB2 or Blue

Force Tracker have to be made to work with other systems such as Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) or Command Post of the Future (CPOF).

System interoperability and other barriers that impede information sharing negate the advantages of being able to attain the information in the first place. They prevent the effective exchange of time-sensitive information and must be overcome.

Another major impediment to attaining and sharing timely information is a commander with an exclusive rather than inclusive mind-set toward modular brigade operations. A commander who will not allow subordinates the initiative to work with other organizations or who does not emphasize the importance of constantly sharing information within the organization will never get ahead of today's adaptive enemy.

One of the keys to successful horizontal information sharing is to use liaison officers (LNOs). While changes in technology may appear to have reduced the need for effective LNOs, the opposite is true: these officers improve coordination and information

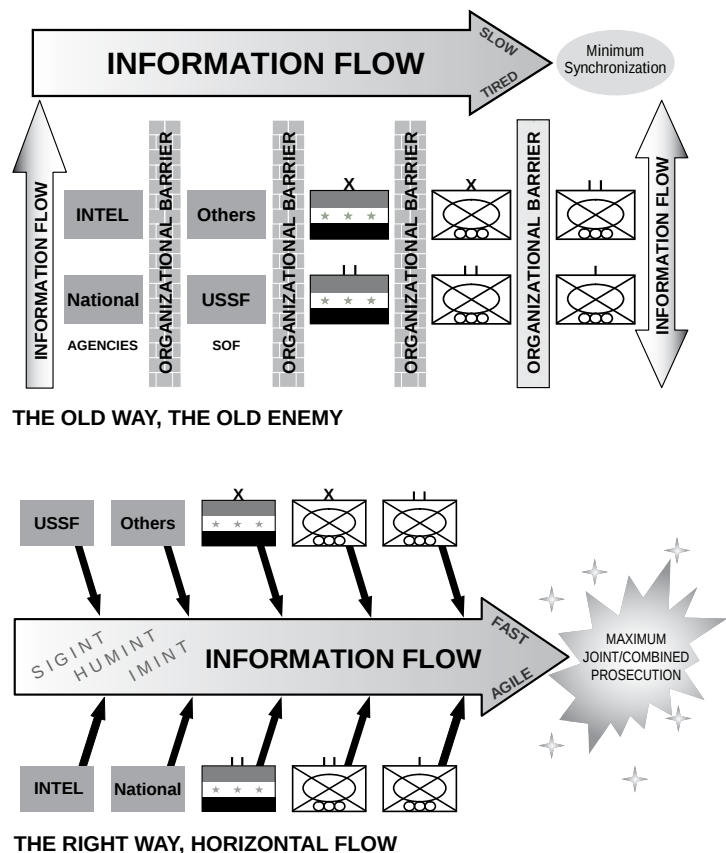


Figure 2. Transforming information flow.

sharing between echelons and organizations. In the past, commanders could afford to take risks by sending average officers to work with other organizations. Today, LNOs must be among the best Soldiers in the organization, because it falls to them to filter and prioritize what can be an overwhelming amount of information and then disperse only what is relevant to internal and external organizations.

The Benefits of Horizontal Information Flow

One of the capabilities horizontal information flow provides is the ability to react promptly to the enemy. During our time in Iraq, this became apparent after two actions, one a thwarted vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) attack in our area of operations (AO), the other our capture of a high-value target. In both cases, intelligence obtained at multiple echelons was immediately shared among the brigade's units, enabling quick responses that led to enemy defeats. If we had been bound to traditional vertical information methods, the brigade would eventually have received the intelligence, but well past the time to react. In each instance, horizontal information sharing allowed us to *see first, understand first, act first, and finish decisively*.

Thwarting a VBIED. The brigade used a variety of assets organic to its new modular organization to see the enemy and figure out his intentions. After receiving information about a possible threat in our area, we rapidly analyzed the situation and intuited the enemy's plan: to explode a VBIED on a busy street. The brigade's task might seem to have been fairly easy, with one VBIED positioned to inflict casualties. However, such tasks are more complex than they seem because the brigade must conduct analysis that higher levels used to do. The better trained and more agile the brigade and battalion staffs, the better the chance that they will acquire information, turn it into intelligence, and then share that intelligence horizontally, and quickly, to defeat the enemy. In this example, the brigade staff got its information, analyzed it speedily, then immediately alerted subordinate units to the possible presence or imminent arrival of a VBIED. Forewarned, the units picked up the VBIED as it moved into the AO, determined its exact location once parked and guessed the enemy's intentions, then passed that information across the brigade. Thanks to horizontal

information sharing and our new assets, we were able to act first, positioning forces to keep civilian and military personnel away from the VBIED danger zone and destroying the VBIED before the enemy could use it to produce casualties.

We were even able to exploit our success by telling the population about what the enemy had sought to do and how we had foiled his plans. It was very important for them to understand that terrorists were attempting to use the VBIED and possibly harm innocent civilians. If the brigade had not gotten the information about its operation out quickly, the enemy could have acted first and lied about what had occurred to gain an advantage. In this case, our swift exploitation of the VBIED's destruction helped gain the population's confidence and trust. Sharing information quickly across all echelons enabled the brigade to plan and develop nearly simultaneous, effective nonlethal responses and gain an advantage over the enemy. For example, our nonlethal cell worked to exploit the event with the mayor, who appeared on television that evening and explained the VBIED situation, in the process demonstrating the effectiveness of the coalition and government security forces.

This type of quick-response operation is common in Iraq. On numerous occasions we used the same methods to disrupt enemy operations. While the *structure* of the modular brigade enables leaders at all levels to use the organization's assets to defeat the enemy, the *power* of the modular brigade is realized only if the entire organization understands the value of sharing critical information horizontally and expeditiously.

Capturing a high-value target. A more complex example of effective horizontal information flow was the close coordination among the brigade's units and external agencies that led to the capture of the most wanted Al-Qaeda leader in northern Iraq. This man, an expert at exploiting the slow response time of our traditionally vertical information flow, had avoided capture for over two years. But we had empowered lower echelon leaders to coordinate freely and share information with internal and external organizations, and their activity led to several key breakthroughs in the search for the Al-Qaeda leader. Our goal—to allow a consistent exchange and analysis of information—produced rapid results.

Battalion-level leaders initiated an exchange of information with special operations forces in their sector, as well as with national agencies supporting their efforts. Liaison officers hustled information between echelons, commands, and agencies, enabling the prompt exploitation of data. The Iraqi Army and police were added to the loop. Units closely coordinated operations that helped refine information without worrying about who was in charge or who would get the credit. Supporting and supported relationships for operations were coordinated at the lowest levels, and leaders sorted out the best relationships based on the circumstances. Combining human, signals, and image intelligence assets enabled friendly forces to gain valuable intelligence and get inside the enemy's decision cycle. In the end, empowered leaders in all of the participating organizations broke down many vertical barriers to information sharing and made the capture possible.

Increased information flow and a modular design that incorporates all of the battlefield operating systems while adding additional brigade dynamics (i.e., a robust nonlethal operating cell) have changed the capabilities at brigade and below. This change requires junior leaders to function at higher levels. At the end of the day, it is about trusting and empowering the "edges" (Soldiers, sergeants, and company-grade officers), training, and leader development.

What We Learned

The twin challenges of modular transformation and combat with a resourceful, mutable enemy made for a steep learning curve. We had been given a powerful new organization; our task was to figure out how to make it work to the utmost detriment of our enemies in Iraq. Our lessons learned follow.

Getting structural leverage. If we want to preempt enemy actions and turn the complexities of modularity into benefits, we must adjust our methods. For example, intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) is still a useful tool, but we need to modify it to account for the modular brigade's ability to gain near-real-time intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) information. We have to spend more time and analysis on real-time ISR data that can tell us what the enemy *is* doing, and less on IPB that merely predicts what he *might* do at some point in the future. The modular brigade's ability to

rapidly cross-reference human, signals, and image intelligence—and its greatly improved ability to conduct such traditional IPB tasks as terrain analysis—can significantly enhance the efficacy of the IPB-ISR process and provide an effective means to analyze and portray relevant enemy data.

With the addition of a robust nonlethal element, the modular brigade can significantly affect the enemy in ways that were previously restricted to higher echelons. It is important that nonlethal capabilities have the same focus and priority as lethal options. An effective nonlethal section can develop proactive messages and themes that we can broadcast via television, flyers, radio, websites, etc. Nonlethal options require more thought, but the payoff can be significant. For example, in Mosul the Iraqis capitalized on local hatred for foreign suicide bombers by producing a television show, *Confessions* (initially *Mosul's Most Wanted*), that highlighted captured foreigners who admitted they were terrorists. It became one of the most popular shows in Iraq, provided a multitude of tips against terrorist organizations, and significantly reduced the terrorists' ability to intimidate the populace.

Agile and adaptive training. The modular brigade's new capabilities significantly affect the way the brigade should train. Because the new brigade has many more personnel who need specialized training, it must periodically include many external agencies in its training if it wants to maximize training benefits. Thus, the brigade's coordination with external agencies increases tenfold. But the old method of training one simple task at a time, discretely, doesn't push Soldiers and leaders to become the kind of agile, adaptive thinkers who can perform successfully across the entire spectrum of operations. They might have the talent, but if they're not forced to exercise it, they will not develop it. That would be a recipe for failure in a contemporary operating environment (COE) whose threats demand that we be agile and adaptive. What we need is a new way of training Soldiers, leaders, and staffs (figure 3).

Training Soldiers. We must continue to work the fundamentals that we have trained for centuries, but good basic skills alone will not guarantee success. This means we must incorporate tasks into every training event that force us to be agile and adaptable. We must take our Soldiers out of their comfort

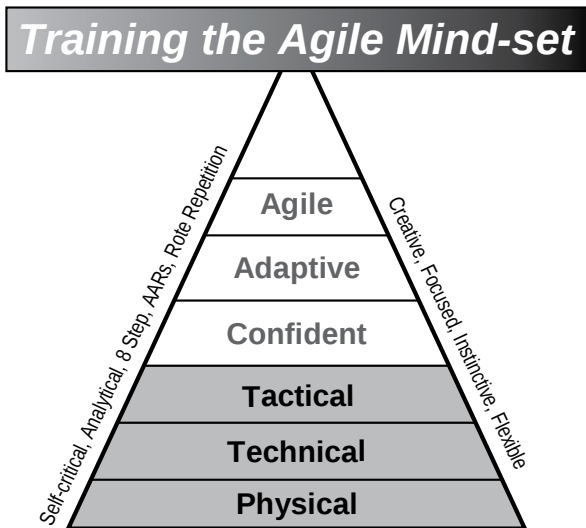


Figure 3. Training for agility.

zones from their first day of training by replicating the fog of war even during rote tasks. Soldiers must see training as a set of evolutionary experiences, not just a place to go to.

A simple example of how to train properly might involve a weapons range. Previous ineffective methods have had Soldiers show up at the range and perform the repetitive task of firing at targets until they are proficient. Some advanced weapons techniques and concurrent training for NCOs may have been included, but overall, the training only got at the fundamental task of qualifying with a weapon.

The agile mind-set leader would conduct the weapons qualification training in a much different manner. Soldiers would not only qualify on their weapons system, but would also prepare themselves for combat in today's unpredictable environment. The movement to the range would include several events that forced Soldiers (and leaders) to deal with complex situations; for example, a squad leader could be declared injured and a team leader forced to move up one position. Movement to the range could be by convoy, with a training IED exploded to add complexity to the mission. Soldiers could be required to provide security at the range and to cope with civilians who discover a cache in the area. Qualification itself would occur under realistic conditions, with NCOs supervising their units as they would in combat. There would be no safe areas where personnel could wait around out of harm's way; instead, the unit would practice the difficult task of always

being postured for protection even when it is boring and uncomfortable to do so. In short, all decisions leaders make would have distinct consequences. This would help prepare them for the ambiguity they will face in many combat situations.

Some suggest that we have always trained in this manner. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Many units and schoolhouses continue to train using rote methods only, fostering a checklist mentality among those who receive the training. Certainly we must attend to the fundamentals, but our training should also include the unexpected aspects of warfare that develop the mental agility required in conflict. Agility can no longer be a training afterthought. To truly train as we fight, we must make Soldiers exercise mental agility consistently, for any contingency, and across the spectrum of operations.

Training leaders. For junior level leaders, taking the initiative used to be much easier. Remember the old saying, "Do something, lieutenant, do *anything*, just make a decision"? With the amount of information available to junior leaders in the modular brigade, the meaning of taking the initiative to make decisions has changed significantly. Junior leaders now receive an overwhelming amount of information, and we must train them to quickly convert that information into knowledge so that they can make good, fast decisions.

We have found that junior leaders will do one of three things with the increased information they receive:

- They will be overwhelmed by the information and completely disregard it when making decisions.
- They will attempt to acquire more information and become paralyzed by the data.
- They will sort through the information briskly and select the key portions that enable them to make a solid, timely decision.

To help junior leaders get comfortable with making fast, informed decisions in complex environments, we must place them in training situations that consistently generate overwhelming amounts of information. Only then will they develop the proper decision-making skills needed for actual operations. As with Soldier training, events must expose them to the multitude of factors they will face in actual combat. We must consistently produce information from the modular brigade's many capabilities (unmanned aerial vehicles, human and signals intelligence capabilities, the shared common

operating picture, and current, digitally received situational reports) and make our young leaders deal with it. Because they are keenly aware that they can be micromanaged with today's technology, these leaders need to train with the support of higher headquarters, so that they will know when their senior leaders are most likely to drill down to their level to assist them. We must also build the confidence of these young leaders by letting them know that senior leaders will not interfere with their actions at inappropriate times during operations.

Leader training is essential for developing the initiative required for the agile-leader mind-set. All levels within the modular brigade need a regular program of leader training that cultivates confident leaders who can think agilely and adaptively in complex situations. Leader development events such as staff rides, tactical exercises without troops, leadership scenarios, and professional development classes remain an integral part of a training program and require the entire chain of command's support. Some of this leadership training will entail complex simulation exercises, but we can complete other events with resources that have been around for years, such as the standard leadership reaction course.

During these leadership events, it is critical that commanders at all levels reward initiative and creativity and underwrite honest mistakes. Nothing will stifle initiative more than chastising a leader for a bold move or punishing him for an honest mistake.

Leadership-focused training properly planned and executed at multiple echelons within the brigade will yield positive results during future combat operations. In Iraq, our post-combat after-action reviews regularly found that the extensive leadership training we had conducted was a key ingredient to our success. Moreover, the majority of leaders within the brigade said that, despite an extraordinary emphasis on leader training, we should have conducted even more.

Training staff. Staff training in the modular brigade also requires a break from the old way of doing business. It takes extensive training to make the new brigade's relatively junior staffers competent enough to handle the requirements of the COE. For example, on today's brigade staff, a pre-command captain has access to more information than a lieutenant colonel on a division staff had in the past, yet the captain is obviously much less

experienced, and his time to train is relatively short. So how do we overcome this experience gap? We do it by using simulations and other training methods that consistently work the brigade staff toward scenarios it will face during actual operations. The trick is to build training efficiently and seamlessly into everyday occurrences, and to use technology to leverage real-time operational challenges.

One effective method is to train the staff prior to deployment by using a near-real-time link with a unit deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan. The brigade staff can receive operations orders from a higher headquarters in theater, then plan actions without knowing how the brigade in theater responded and fared. Later, after we run our plan through a simulation or discuss the scenario, we can consider the actual results in theater. The brigade can thus practice operating with real information at all levels for months prior to deployment. Such training has many advantages, but two stand out: the entire staff learns enemy techniques and becomes familiar with enemy personnel, and junior staff officers, in particular, become seasoned by being exposed to real-world experience prior to deployment.

Keys to success. In *Principle Centered Leadership*, Stephen R. Covey claims that "an empowered organization is one in which individuals have the knowledge, skill, desire, and opportunity to personally succeed in a way that leads to collective organizational success."² Commanders seeking to instill an agile-leader mind-set across their organizations will do well to heed Covey. They must set the conditions for wholesale adoption of agile leadership by empowering their subordinates, by resisting the urge to centrally control everything, and by cultivating a culture of cooperation within their units (see figure 4).

Empowerment. Soldiers empowered to make decisions are the foundation for success on today's and tomorrow's battlefields. Modular brigades with sound fundamental skills that aggressively incorporate agility and adaptability across the tactical spectrum can get inside the enemy's decision cycle and dominate operations. The empowered operating environment will be uncomfortable for leaders used to the old vertical command-and-control decision-making structure, and they may fall back on previous training and habits, especially under pressure. We must therefore encourage empowerment throughout

the entire organization and practice it relentlessly so that it will work when the unit is under pressure.

How a leader responds to his subordinates' mistakes is also critical. A proper response can encourage learning and confidence; an improper one can undermine efforts to empower Soldiers and rapidly stifle initiative within a unit. Experience has proven that empowerment, when properly supported, will lead to unprecedented and impressive results. If a senior leader overreacts to a mistake, his unit may never undertake bold initiatives again. To maximize the benefits of empowerment, Soldiers require a freedom of thought that only comes from training that has consistently emphasized trust and confidence among unit members.

The Soldier-centric organization. Effective empowerment leads to a "Soldier-centric" organization whose Soldiers, freed from unnecessary constraints, can apply the brigade's myriad capabilities. Gone are the days when a commander could require that he approve every operation or event. That type of control leads to organizations with a vertical information flow, a slow decision cycle, and little chance of staying ahead of the enemy. The days of pushing both responsibility and authority as close to the tip

of the spear as possible have arrived. Commanders at all levels must clearly define their subordinates' decision-making authority and then back them up with action. This is not easy. Some commanders will feel uncomfortable about giving up the control that has traditionally been restricted to higher levels.

Commanders must also fight the temptation to surround themselves with excessive amounts of data so that they can micromanage subordinate units. These leaders create a "control-centric" environment that stifles initiative and produces disastrous results on the battlefield. By assuming that they can interpret and act on information faster and better than anyone else, control-centric commanders signal that they do not trust their subordinates to make good decisions. They slow down the decision-making process, allowing an agile and adaptive enemy to change the operating environment before their decisions make their way to those responsible for action. Leaders who use data and their unit's digital capabilities to stifle initiative and micromanage subordinates will never defeat an adaptive enemy on a consistent basis. Only a Soldier-centric organization that empowers Soldiers at all levels will be able to exploit the information

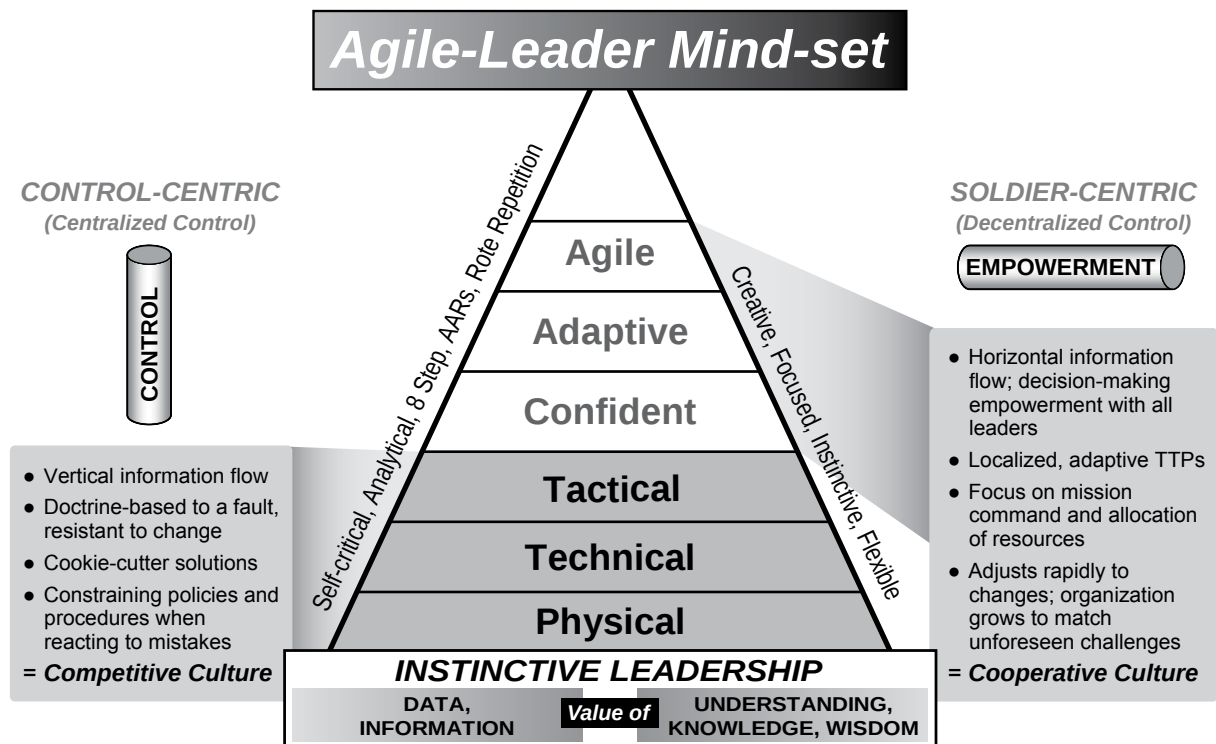


Figure 4. Agile-leader mind-set expanded.

advantage fully. It will consistently defeat an enemy who can adapt, but who does not have the training or foundation to be routinely agile.

Cooperative culture. A genuinely empowered organization deemphasizes competition in favor of a culture of cooperation. The only place for competition is against the enemy. A cooperative culture shares information; its units do not compete with other units or agencies during operations. In the competitive interagency environment we inhabit today, this team-first attitude does not come naturally; to achieve it, leaders at all levels must constantly stress the importance of cooperation to mission success. Unit or interagency competition creates organizational seams that the enemy can exploit. It weakens all concerned.

We must use training events and sustainment events during combat to ensure that the team attitude does not erode. Unlike in the past, when attachments would arrive just before deployment, modular units train and fight together full time. In a modular unit, every Soldier must understand how his role contributes to unit success, so that he will always feel like a valuable member of the team. While the modular structure lends itself naturally to teamwork, it is important to focus on teambuilding at the brigade level. Battalions practice teamwork almost daily, but the commander of a modular brigade must look hard for opportunities to build his team.

Sponsoring periodic leader events with all E-7s and above can help build an effective brigade team. These events should mix personnel who do not normally associate with each other into groups and present complex problems whose resolution requires quick critical thinking. The activity could be as simple as an expanded leadership reaction course scenario or as complex as an off-site training event. It should include mentoring by senior leaders. A multi-layered approach to team building is essential to ensure that a spirit of cooperation pervades the organization's culture. A genuinely cooperative attitude is tough to build at the brigade level, but well worth the effort.

Flexibility. An empowered, Soldier-centric organization relies on localized, flexible tactics, techniques, and procedures. The best way to fight an adaptive and devious enemy is to give leaders at all levels the freedom to adjust to changes quickly and out-think the enemy. Given the proper

command climate, leaders will readily share their lessons learned and the techniques they used with others. Doctrine is an excellent guide, and we should always consider it, but too rigid an application of doctrine makes a unit predictable and, hence, vulnerable. Those who resist change are doomed to failure. By definition, flexible leaders are adaptive leaders.

The Agile-Leader Mind-Set at Work

When a unit trains to produce a cooperative team environment, one that empowers Soldiers to make rapid decisions and to act on those decisions without unnecessary interference from higher, the rewards, as we learned in Iraq time and again, are plentiful. This became especially clear to us during one particular operation against Al-Qaeda.

Our human intelligence (HUMINT) capability discovered that an Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) leader planned to assassinate the successful Iraqi police chief of a critical town. The infantry unit responsible for the town immediately worked to get inside the enemy's decision cycle and to use the information to neutralize the AQI leader (see diagram 1).

Predeployment training in which HUMINT personnel worked with infantry and reconnaissance units had led to a mutual understanding that it was critical to get the intelligence collectors out of the forward operating bases and in with the infantry, among the people. The battalion that received the HUMINT collection team was empowered to use it, along with other assets in its sector, to take immediate action against the enemy. Within several hours of receiving the assassination intelligence, the battalion shared the information with a special operations unit and developed a plan to capture or kill the enemy. Subsequently, when the original human source of the report linked up with the AQI leader, U.S. and Iraqi forces were able to intercept the latter and neutralize him and two other members of his organization.

During this operation, a variety of assets enhanced unit situational awareness and made success possible. The Air Force provided close air support and aerial monitoring, several unmanned aerial vehicles provided specialized tracking (diagram 2), a special operations element interdicted the AQI cell and the infantry used their Stryker vehicles'

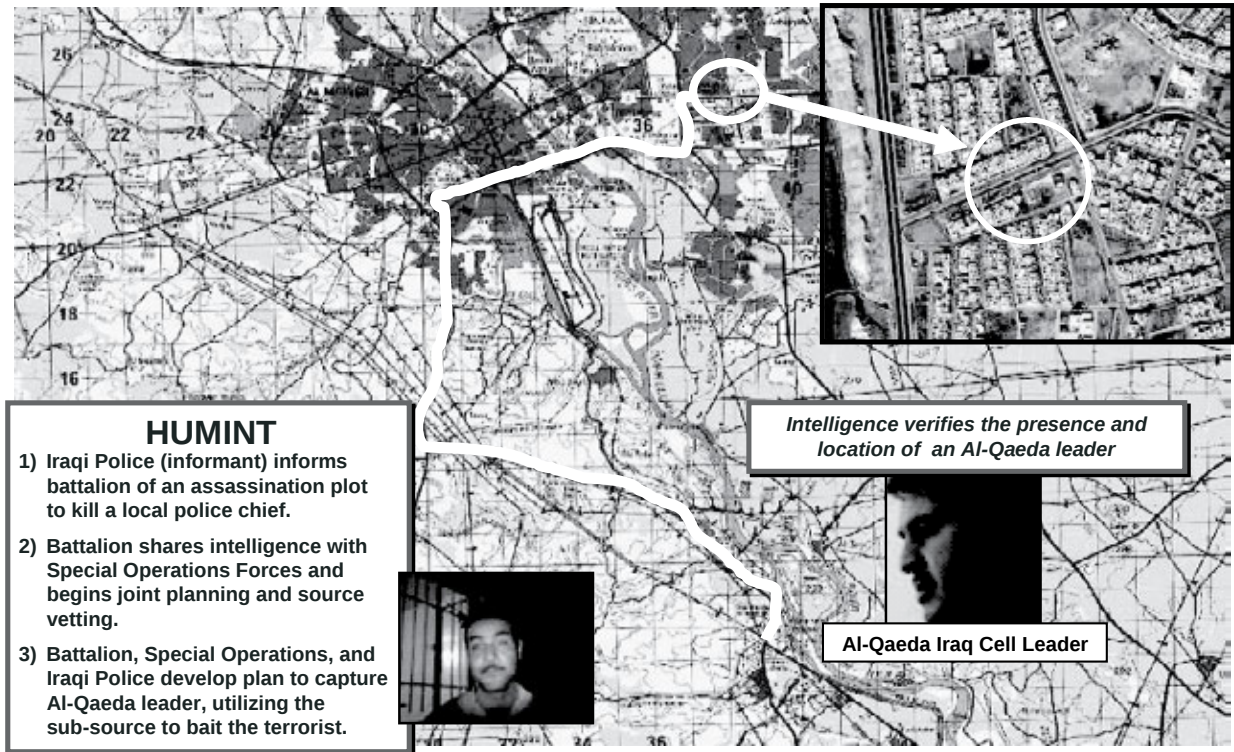


Diagram 1. Sharing intelligence, developing a plan.

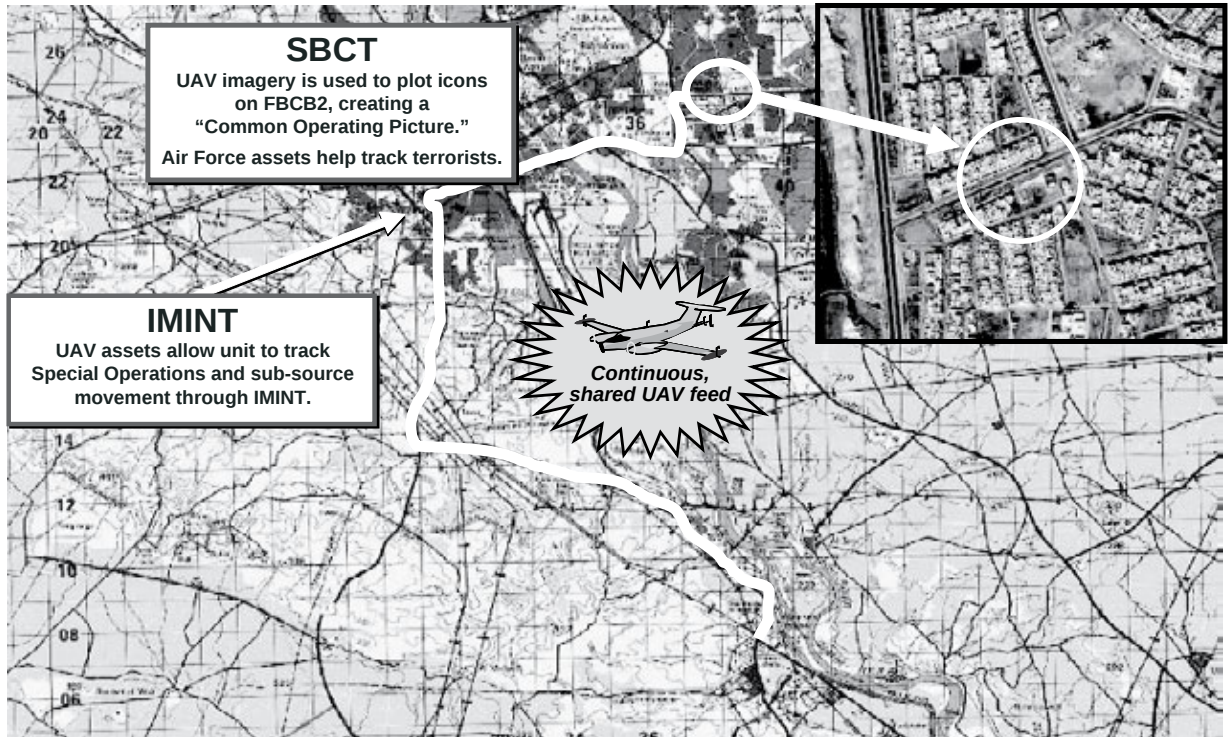


Diagram 2. Tracking the enemy and friendly forces.

LEGEND: EOD, explosive ordnance disposal; FBCB2, Force XXI Battle Command, Brigade-and-Below; HUMINT, human intelligence; IMINT, imagery intelligence; KIA, killed in action; SBCT, Stryker brigade combat team; SIGINT, signals intelligence; UAV, unmanned aerial vehicle; USSF, U.S. Special Forces

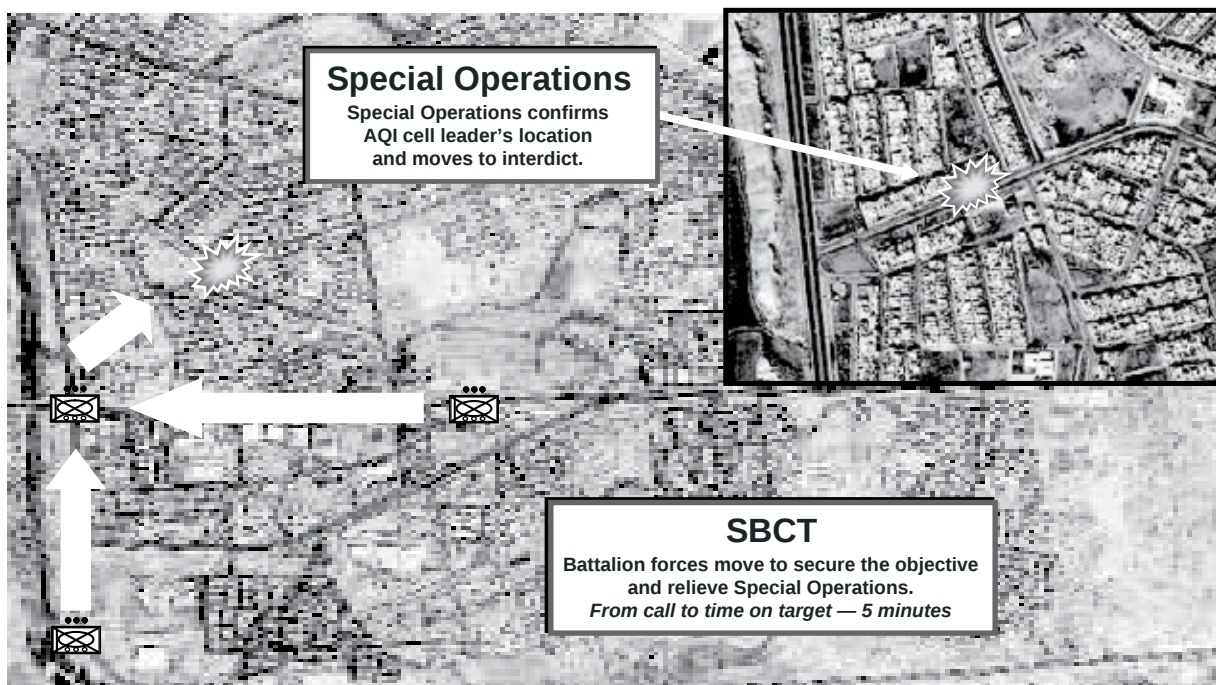


Diagram 3. Taking down the target.



Diagram 4. Consolidating the objective, exploiting the operation.

speed and mobility to seal off the area and close the deal (diagrams 3 and 4). The entire operation was planned and executed within 12 hours by an empowered group of leaders who coordinated and

cooperated to defeat three AQI personnel, one a key leader. This result would not have been possible in a competitive culture or under a commander who had to personally approve every operation.

Instinctive Leadership

The commanders of empowered units that apply the agile-leader mind-set will eventually reach a level of decision-making we might call “instinctive leadership.” Unlike the commanders of completely data-centric units who rely on volumes of information that may not lead to any meaningful action, instinctive leaders cultivate an overall understanding of the environment, the enemy, and the enemy’s leaders. This knowledge enables them to make the right decisions in complex situations. Commanders at all levels use instincts they have developed over years of experience, but the real question is, Do they listen to those instincts when they make key decisions that will disrupt and defeat the enemy? Commanders who have long relied on school solutions or who feel they must have all the facts at their disposal first will feel uncomfortable making instinctive decisions at first. They may even feel as if they are guessing on important issues. However, the ability to intuit the best course of action is part of the art of war. It is what makes a commander successful in the first place.

Of course, it takes practice to develop the right instincts. Commanders must learn how to manage the wealth of data that the staff provides before they put their instincts into play. It is very easy for the modular brigade staff to inundate the commander with information and paralyze the entire organization. The staff needs to review and organize data carefully to determine what is actually important, so that the commander gets as clear a picture as possible prior to engaging his instincts. Often, staff officers or subordinate commanders will pressure the commander to rely on the data and ignore his gut instincts. In this case, it is important for the commander to recognize that because of his experience, he has a unique view of the situation.

The modular brigade’s superior digital capabilities have another potential drawback: they can tempt the commander to rely too much on the operations center for information and thus reduce his battlefield circulation. The operations center will often have the best information and means of unit control in the brigade; however, it is a huge mistake for a commander to stay in the center and skip the battlefield. Soldiers need to see their commander “taste” the action on the ground. It tells them that he is willing to share their risk and really wants to understand what they are up against. In

turn, commanders gain an invaluable perspective from circulating on the battlefield. Sometimes, that perspective provides a nuanced insight that engages the commander’s instincts and leads to effective decision-making.

In Iraq, we made many instinctive decisions after reviewing staff data and walking the ground with units. One key decision involved the use of combat outposts (COPs) in Mosul’s most violent areas. Early on, there were many insurgent-controlled areas that caused problems for coalition forces. Based on input provided by our robust brigade staff and information gleaned from daily visits with friendly units to those areas, we decided to occupy the toughest areas. We established COPs with approximately a platoon’s worth of Soldiers inside each outpost and others who patrolled the surrounding areas. Altogether, we established 23 COPs in the worst areas of Mosul, a city with a population of 2.1 million. That decision changed the entire situation. It enabled us to get inside the enemy’s decision cycle and significantly disrupt his operations. The outposts made enemy actions predictable because, as we had rightly assumed, the insurgents attempted to regain control of the areas by attacking our COPs. The COPs also led the local residents to trust and confide in us when they realized we were in their neighborhoods to stay.

The decision to establish the COPs was based on information and instincts. Well-informed commanders were empowered to make the decisions they thought best. Eventually, Iraqi forces took over our outposts, and their presence stabilized the situation in Mosul so well that the January 2005 elections could occur and some sense of civility could return to the city. The decision to establish COPs was just one of many instances of effective instinctive leadership during Operation Iraqi Freedom. The most important point to remember from it is that instinctive leadership requires leaders who have the confidence and freedom to go with their instincts.

Final Thoughts

Clearly, transforming the Army to a modular brigade design has set the conditions for success across the force. However, any transformation in unit structure must be reinforced by an even more essential transformation in the way we train, lead, and fight. Centralized operational execution and micromanaged subordinate formations are now

obsolete; we must train and encourage leaders to act independently and apply the agile-leader mind-set during all missions. Our Soldiers and junior leaders fighting the war on terrorism understand the training they need to do and the combat adjustments they need to make to defeat the enemy. However, above the junior leader level there is a general lack of understanding about the level of empowerment necessary to be successful. Senior leaders must realize that for the modular structure to work best, they must be comfortable with less control of the decision-making process. Leading today means creating a command environment that empowers Soldiers at all levels to make decisions and take immediate action. It means drawing upon the best information and ideas regardless of the source. It means making the problem statement the leader and not letting one's ego and need for control get in the way of fast, effective decisions.

Application of the agile-leader mind-set will create organizations that harness the power of their structure and operate at unprecedented levels of performance across the spectrum of conflict. Soldier-centric organizations that emphasize a cooperative attitude and horizontal information flow will be able to defeat the ruthless, decentralized enemy we will continue to face. Our challenge as leaders will be to leverage our past experience even as we break free from it. If we do not, and we fail to make the adjustments we must make to be successful, we will be neither relevant nor ready to win the long war. **MR**

NOTES

1. Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking* (New York: Little Brown, 2005), 141.
2. Stephen R. Covey, *Principle Centered Leadership* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 212.



This article is dedicated to a true American hero, CPT Bill Jacobsen, 1-25 SBCT. Bill was the perfect example of an Agile Leader and his exemplary courage, dedication to his soldiers, and selfless service during combat operations in Iraq will never be forgotten. We miss you Bill!

Peace in the Posavina, or Deal with Us!

**Colonel Gregory Fontenot,
U.S. Army, Retired**



I HAVE SHAMELESSLY APPROPRIATED the title of this article on battle command at the brigade level in Bosnia from then-Lieutenant Colonel (now Brigadier General) Tony Cucolo, who commanded the 3d Battalion, 5th Cavalry (Black Knights), one of the battalions assigned to 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, in 1995-96. Painted on a sign prominently hung over the entrance to the largely destroyed communal farm just south of Brcko that the Black Knights called home, Cucolo's pithy phrase served as the battalion's informal motto. The Posavina is what the locals called the Sava River valley, the region in northeast Bosnia where the brigade served from December 1995 until November 1996. The motto described Cucolo's perception of what the Nation asked of him and his troops in Bosnia. It resonated with both his troops and me. Simply put, the mission in Bosnia in that first year of operations required the Implementation Force (IFOR) to compel peace if required to do so. IFOR did not deploy to Bosnia to monitor a peace agreed to by the warring parties, but to "implement" peace, by force if necessary. Cucolo had it dead right: peace in the Posavina or, by god, deal with all of us, including the Black Knights.

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PHOTO: Checkpoint 7, "Desolation Boulevard," on the Serb side of the zone of separation, spring 1996 (photo courtesy of the author).

Prelude to the Mission

Even in the last months before troops deployed, the very idea of a NATO-led mission in Bosnia seemed improbable, but a series of events in 1995 ultimately made the improbable a fact. Richard Holbrooke's self-serving *To End a War* aside, the contesting parties—Milosevic and the Bosnian Serbs, in particular—agreed to the Dayton Accords for three reasons: force employed by the United Kingdom and France on the ground and NATO fighters in the air, the successful Bosnian Croat spring offensive, and exhaustion.¹ The embarrassment and outrage stemming from Srebrenica, where the Serbs humiliated UN troops and slaughtered Bosnian Muslims in a supposed UN safe haven, galvanized NATO. After more than three years of savage civil war, NATO, with UN approval, moved in to enforce the agreement Holbrooke and his team had negotiated.²

In today's "war on terrorism," it is sometimes hard to recall the sense of dread and uncertainty the mission to Bosnia called up in the minds of those

who led the way in December 1995. United States Army Europe (USAREUR), which provided the vast majority of the U.S. troops assigned to IFOR, had long anticipated some kind of mission in Bosnia. Soon after Yugoslavia began to unravel in the early 1990s, USAREUR began nearly continuous preparations for various contingencies in the Balkans generally oriented toward rescuing UN troops assigned the impossible task of keeping a peace that never existed. To be fair, the Soldiers who worked in the Balkans in the various contingents assigned to the UN Protection Force and to smaller missions monitoring fighting elsewhere, including eastern Croatia, struggled with inadequate resources and equally inadequate mandates. From 1992 onward, the Army in Europe examined the means and practiced plans designed to either succor those forces or support various peace efforts.³

The focus of this article is command at the brigade level in a stability and support operation that constituted a major departure from the mistaken notion that U.S. Armed Forces should not be involved in these kinds of operations. This account is personal, anecdotal, and not intended as a template for others; rather, I offer it so that what we learned might be passed on for others to consider, and possibly to apply. There is more to say about this challenging and in some ways wonderful mission than space here allows. Accordingly, this discussion concentrates on the early days of the mission at the expense of attempting to address battle command over the long haul. Finally, these few pages reflect my personal judgment about what worked and what did not. It is also an attempt to describe the conditions in which the Ready First Combat Team (RFCT) (1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division) operated.

The mission to Bosnia evoked dread and uncertainty for several reasons. Partly this dread stemmed from the sheer difficulty of operating in the rugged terrain of Bosnia, but it was a difficulty much enhanced by the mythology that emerged from the World War II experience of German forces in Yugoslavia—the popular histories of that experience conjured images of Serbian Chetniks lurking behind every tree in the craggy, densely forested hills of Bosnia. Such worries blended seamlessly with the U.S. Army’s more recent, and equally unpleasant, experience in Somalia. “Mission creep,”

a term made famous by Mark Bowden in *Black Hawk Down* but little heard now, emerged from the Rangers’ fight in the streets of Mogadishu and had already become the “elephant in the room” for Soldiers from private to general.

As planners and commanders considered what to do if sent to Bosnia, they brooded over concerns that troops might be ordered into a maelstrom of fire from the ubiquitous and apparently savage militias indiscriminately killing each other and civilians. Ambiguity about what could happen, more than fear of the fighting capacity of the militias, stimulated unease. Despite more than a little healthy anxiety about the unknown, the Army in Europe planned and trained hard to fight, if necessary, and to transition rapidly to what in those days was called Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW).

It was in this context that I assumed command of 1st Brigade in June of 1995. Cucolo and Lieutenant Colonel Neal Anderson joined me as the other newcomers to the brigade command team. Anderson took command of the Bandits, the 4th Battalion, 67th Armor, the day before I assumed command. Cucolo took over the Black Knights a few days later. Lieutenant Colonel Mike Jones, who commanded the Iron Dukes of the 2d Battalion, 67th Armor, rounded out the maneuver force command team. The rest of our group included Lieutenant Colonel Pete Corpac, who commanded the Gunners of the 2d Battalion, 3d Field Artillery, in direct support of the brigade; Lieutenant Colonel Todd Semonite, who led the Ready Sappers of the 23d Engineer Battalion; and Lieutenant Colonel Tony Young, commander of the 501st Forward Support Battalion (FSB). Young’s battalion called themselves Pillars, as in “Pillars of the 1st Brigade.”

We came to know each other quickly because the brigade almost immediately headed off to Hohenfels to train for six weeks. Jones, the Iron Dukes, and most of the direct support troops went a day or two after I assumed command. The rest of us followed after participating in the division change of command (Major General Bill Nash taking over from Major General Bill Carter). Despite arriving in June, I soon became the dean of the commanders in the division, since every brigade changed commanders that summer. None of that mattered much to the Ready First or me though, because we spent most of the summer in the field.⁴



DOD

Lieutenant Colonel Anthony A. Cucolo III, Commander, 3d Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, briefs Secretary of Defense William J. Perry at the United States Base Camp, Multi-National Division North, during Operation Joint Endeavor, July 1996.

What I needed to think about was how to do this new and very different thing. Commanding a brigade is by no means the same as commanding a battalion. I knew because I had served as a brigade operations officer and executive officer and had had the opportunity to observe three very good brigade commanders, either by working directly for them or by serving in their brigades. In addition to two years working at the brigade level, I also served first as executive officer and later as commander of a tank battalion in the same brigade.

From those experiences and my understanding of Army doctrine, I believed two things unequivocally. The first was that brigade commanders own nothing. In those days, only the headquarters and headquarters company actually “belonged” to the brigade. All of the battalions that stood in formation the day I assumed command were “loaners” from the guy who did own them—the commanding general of 1st Armored Division. I forgot that occasionally, but when I did, someone always reminded me. Once when I used the term “my battalions” to describe units assigned to the brigade, Nash reminded me whose battalions they were. Another time occurred during our Battle Command Training Program Warfighter seminar, in February 1997. By then I knew whose battalions they were, but 1st Brigade called itself the Ready First Combat Team, as did Nash. When asked to brief my concept, I referred to a chart that bore the label “RFCT.” Our senior observer, retired General Dick Cavasos, who knew very well I commanded a brigade and not a regi-

ment, took a few minutes while assuming both a pained look and an exaggerated aura of patience, to remind me again that the brigade “owned” no battalions and so was not a combat team. Thereafter, our charts described the outfit as “the brigade formerly known as the Ready First Combat Team.” That, of course, has changed. Brigades now quite properly call themselves combat teams, to the everlasting satisfaction of many of us who served in the RFCT.

The second thing I believed is that brigades exist exclusively to assign resources and integrate combined arms to achieve missions assigned by the division commander. Specifically, a brigade commander’s task is to “accept, interpret, and decide, creatively, how to implement the intent of the division and perhaps the corps commander in order to accomplish the outcomes they intend when they assign missions.”⁵ Even with the move to a brigade-based Army, brigade commanders will continue to execute missions assigned by higher authority. To do this successfully, they have several overarching obligations. First, they must understand that they do not decide what to do so much as how to do it, and they have a legal and moral obligation to meet the intended outcomes inherent in their assigned missions. Second, they must accept and even embrace ambiguity. And finally, because long-duration deployments are characterized by dispersed and decentralized operations, they (as well as battalion and company commanders) must learn to think differently about time and link tactical operations differently than they do in conventional operations.

None of these ideas relieve brigade commanders of the other responsibilities inherent in command, such as the obligation to ensure that subordinate units meet the standards stipulated by regulation and by the brigade commanders themselves. In short, a brigade commander must be tactically competent, must understand how assigned units are designed to function, and must ensure that those units are trained to perform their missions. This means becoming familiar with, if not expert in, the disciplines and tasks of units assigned in direct support. It means knowing how to support their training as part of a combined arms team and

understanding how to integrate those capabilities as part of that same team.

Command is bound up inextricably with the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with Soldiers, subordinate commanders, peers, and superiors. For me, communicating with the troops was as important as communicating with their commanders, my colleagues, or my boss. Commanding at any level is both a team sport and very personal. In my case, this meant talking with and listening to those with whom I served. Sometimes that meant telling a commander something he did not want to hear. At Hohenfels that first summer in command, I had a chat with one of the commanders about shortcomings I perceived in his outfit. An effective but very new battalion commander, he rushed to the defense of his just-acquired command. I told him that while he looked at his battalion and saw a brand-new, high-speed, low-drag sports car, I saw a dented sedan that needed air in its tires. He got the message. In the end, and as a consequence of his leadership, I came to agree with him that, indeed, his battalion was a hot rod.

Identifying and ensuring that standards are met is also an essential component of command. No commander can be everywhere and do everything. The standards he sets (in accordance with Army doctrine) must be met so that he can control and command his unit. Enforcing standards is part observation and part communication. Soldiers need to know what their commander expects of them. Often, communicating the standard clearly is enough because most Soldiers want to do the right thing. They want to be challenged and expect that they will have to meet rigorous standards. A commander's job is to make the rigorous routine, so that even more difficult things can be done.

Communicating in a line unit, or any unit for that matter, entails more than just words. Actions communicate intent as well. Taking the time to drink coffee with the medics assigned to the forward support battalion or gathering troops informally in the field or in garrison is part of the job—and much more fun than reading email. One technique I employed was to have Soldiers show me they could do a challenging task. For example, early in my tenure I asked a combat lifesaver to start an IV on me while in the field. After that, I invited the battalion commanders to give up their own arms. Not

all took advantage of the invitation, but Lieutenant Colonel Jones did and continued to do so, even after one of his troops drew blood that jetted out of his arm as he lay patiently on the front slope of his tank. Equally important, word got around that Jones and I trusted our Soldiers with pointy objects.

Communicating effectively also meant hearing what I did not want to hear. Taking bad news well or accepting criticism is an essential part of communicating as a commander. Major Chris De Graff served with me during my entire tenure, first as my operations officer and then as my executive officer. De Graff exemplified the roles of alter ego and Greek muse brilliantly. He never let me off easy when he thought I was wrong or when he felt that I needed to do something I had not considered, or, even more important, when he felt that I should stop doing something I wanted to do.

Learning my role and getting to know the brigade proved to be a lot of fun. The summer of 1995 seemed idyllic for that reason. The brigade trained hard and did so with other units of the division, including 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry, and 4th Battalion, 12th Infantry. We worked doggedly on both combat and stability operations. Among other things, we practiced coping with recalcitrant factions, civilians, civilian authority, obscure treaty language, and a host of other issues related to Bosnia.

The brigade returned from a Hohenfels rotation at the end of July, and the headquarters immediately prepared for a second Partnership for Peace exercise in the Czech Republic. That exercise, Cooperative Challenge 95, featured a multinational brigade built on an amalgam of the 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, and 4th Parachute Brigade of the Czech Army.

Cooperative Challenge required the “combined” brigade to exercise command over 13 battalions from 11 countries, most of them non-NATO nations. The scenario featured a postwar stability operation in a country that bore a striking resemblance to Bosnia. Before we knew it, the summer was over, and we were being told by Brigadier General Pat O’Neal, then the acting chief of staff at V Corps, to plan on going to Bosnia—and soon.

Nearly from that moment in August 1995 until the last unit of the brigade returned from Bosnia on 8 December 1996, thinking about Bosnia, training to go to Bosnia, deploying to Bosnia, operating in Bosnia, or recovering from deploying to Bosnia

occupied virtually every moment of every day. Put another way, for 17 months Bosnia consumed the brigade's energy, time, and people (the latter including one killed and six wounded by mines or command-detonated explosions and another two who died accidentally). The time flew by. We never had enough time. All of us learned the hard lesson Napoleon taught when he told his generals they could ask for anything except time.

O'Neal's news put Cooperative Challenge in a new light. The brigade staff had learned how to get things done during the six weeks at Hohenfels, but Cooperative Challenge forced it to focus on developing standing operating procedures for working in a multinational stability operation. In short, the exercise served as a rehearsal for what followed. Toward its end, Major General Nash asked me to join him and Colonel John Brown, his chief of staff. He told me that my gunnery cycle scheduled for October would now become a mission rehearsal exercise to prepare the division for deployment to Bosnia. A few days later, the brigade headquarters returned to home station at Ayers Kaserne. We arrived home in the wee hours of the first Saturday in October and departed by convoy and rail for Grafenwoehr on Monday. That was the last "free" weekend at home for the entire 1st Brigade headquarters until Thanksgiving 1996.

The Bosnia operation—Operation Joint Endeavor, as we soon learned to call it—would occur in several phases (some of which could not be identified in October 1995). These included:

- Training and deploying nearly simultaneously.
- Occupying the zone and separating the factions (December 1995–February 1996).
- Assuring the factions reached required military milestones and simultaneously establishing useful programs to support reconciliation (March–June 1996).
- Assuring steady-state compliance with the military requirements of the Dayton Accords while coping with the return of (primarily) Bosnians to contested regions in the Posavina (late June 1996 until the end of our deployment).

Several other tasks that constituted phases of the operation in their own right would overlap with these. Chief among them were preparation and execution of national elections (September 1996) and finding a group from among the factions and

the international community to take over leadership of the effort from IFOR. This was important because doing so would allow the much smaller forces that came to constitute the Stabilization Force to function effectively. From the start, the military organizations in Bosnia provided the bulk of the effort and, in many cases, the leadership to advance the civil side of the Accords.

Deployment to Bosnia

No one who has deployed on a military operation will ever subscribe to the notion that getting there is half the fun. Any deployment is fraught with frustration, confusion bordering on chaos, and marching and countermarching as the politicians haggle over the shape of the mission and how best to keep the number of deploying Soldiers low while asserting that the mission must be achieved at light speed without anyone getting hurt. For the commanders involved, there are many rules and constraints and few good options, but the most important rules are unofficial: be patient, exude calm, and make the best of whatever comes your way.

In the middle of frenetic planning, training, and preparing for deployment, I had to make one of many unpleasant choices: we would leave one battalion behind. I did not want to tell any of my commanders they would not come with the rest of us. At the same time, I knew from my experience in Operation Desert Storm that we needed a strong rear detachment to push the brigade out the door and to take care of families. I knew that I needed someone who could deal effectively with all of the detritus of deploying, from storing personal effects to coping with family problems that could develop into serious issues for Soldiers in the field.

Mission came first. Our mission would place us in the Posavina Corridor in northeast Bosnia. The only sure thing in my mind was that I needed the infantry battalion. The Black Knights had to go, and they had to be the main effort to deal with Brcko, which was at the top of nearly everyone's list of difficult places in a difficult country. Fundamentally, my choice came down to leaving either Anderson or Jones behind. I agonized about it, finally choosing to leave Jones and the Iron Dukes for two reasons: I needed a proven, able commander who would do what had to be done, and Jones had proven that he could operate at higher levels.

To my consternation, Nash knew a good thing when he saw it, and he subsequently chose Jones to run the division's deployment effort. The Iron Dukes not only deployed 1st Brigade, but just about everything that went from Germany to Bosnia. In order to reach Bosnia, Jones, 1st Armored Division, and the brigade had to defeat winter, the Alps, various diplomatic hassles over transiting countries with our tanks, rail strikes, holidays that proceeded whether we had to deploy or not, and rotten weather. We had to learn three different deployment planning tools, including the Joint Operation Planning and Execution System, which was not written for the faint of heart. Jones described the deployment as "a triumph of the human spirit over an insane system, one that narrowly averted catastrophe."⁶ Division units traveled to Bosnia by every possible means except by sea. In the brigade headquarters, one of my 18-year-old Soldiers drove a truck more than twice his age 1,056 miles from Kirchgoens, Germany, to Ravne Brcko. He did so in the middle of winter accompanied by other vintage vehicles and several hundred of his buddies.

Executing that deployment, getting into the zone, and getting the mission underway proved to be extremely tough. The weather and living conditions

in Bosnia were more than a little difficult, and to make matters worse, a thaw produced flooding on the Sava River. The 16th Engineers and supporting troops working on bridging the Sava had to evacuate so hastily that many got out with only the clothes on their backs. Through all of the setbacks and frustration, I tried to keep the brigade's leaders and Soldiers calm and unruffled.

One evening during the six weeks of hard training in weather that presaged what we would experience in Bosnia, I had gathered everyone together to do still another orders brief. I began by saying that despite the frustration and anxiety we all felt, we would accomplish our mission. However, to do so we had to accept some unpleasant truths. These included that we would be gone for more than a year. I asked that they consider each other—those who were going and those slated to stay—as family. To support that plea, I had already directed a task organization that substituted part of the Iron Dukes for Anderson's Bandits, so that every unit in the brigade would have at least some Soldiers on the mission to Bosnia and some who would remain in Germany.

The most important thing that night was to get the team past thinking about how miserable and frustrating the process of preparing to go had become. I asked the assembled body if any of them had ever read any military history. They all had. I then asked if they had ever seen maps depicting the American Army's movement into battle. They all had. I reminded them that the maps always had a big blue arrow leading to the battlefield, but no discussion of what went on inside the big blue arrow. I told them that our mission would be no different, and that when someone wrote the history of the operation, there would be a big blue arrow, but only a footnote citing the date we crossed the Sava River. I concluded by telling them that all of this misery was "just a footnote." I shared this thinking with the troops as well. We had a mission; anything else would be just a footnote. Later, I often found that I could bring someone back on track by saying "just a footnote."⁷

Operating in Bosnia

My claim notwithstanding, deploying and crossing the Sava River proved to be a hell of a footnote, one made even more interesting by the fact we could do nothing until (and if) the warring



U.S. Army

A Seabee at work building Camp Kime, January 1996.



DOD

The first U.S. checkpoint on MSR Arizona, December 1995.

factions signed the Accords. That occurred on 15 December and put us in real difficulty because we had to have the factions separated exactly 30 days later. In short, we had to deploy, get into Bosnia, and get the main feature of the military side of the treaty completed in one (very short) month. Alpha Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry, led by Captain Tom Dorame, duly arrived by rail on 17 December 1995 at Vrepolje, Croatia. They managed to download themselves in absolute defiance of USAREUR safety regulations—but in accordance with the best traditions of the service—and made their way some 60 miles to Zupanja, Croatia. The division's advance party—me and 13 other Soldiers, including Lieutenant Colonel Greg Stone, who commanded 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, arrived a day later. We flew in by C-17 to Kaposvar, Hungary, with seven HMMWVs, and drove from there to Zupanja. A few days later O'Neal joined us. On 22 December, a platoon from A Troop established our first checkpoint in Bosnia. On the 31st, despite the flood and miserable weather, the brigade started crossing the Sava over the longest tactical bridge emplaced since World War II. All of the engineers involved did a great job, but laying a bridge is a standard task, so their achievement, like many more to come, was “just a footnote.”⁸

Because things happen fast during any operation, calm and clear communications are essential. On 30 December, several things that required calmness and clear communication happened almost simultaneously. That morning, a detachment from a Military Police (MP) platoon had crossed the Sava

by barge and moved north to mark the route for 1-1 CAV. Ordered to go straight up the hard-surfaced main supply route (MSR), remain on the lateral MSRs, and return the same way they came, they nonetheless got into trouble. For reasons that even he could not explain, the NCO leading the team decided to take a shortcut on an unpaved route through the confrontation lines, and at about 1300 hours the MPs struck a land mine, badly injuring a Soldier. Although ordered not to leave hard-surfaced roads, to make frequent radio checks, and to return immediately to the last

point where they could communicate if a radio check proved unsuccessful, the team not only left the hard-surfaced road but also moved to where they could not communicate.

Unaware of any of this, I returned across the Sava by barge and went to the brigade command post. I entered just as a call came in describing a unit reporting a mine strike from within no-man's-land. The call was nearly inaudible, and we could not understand what they needed until Major General Nash, flying up from Tuzla to visit the brigade, relayed the message from the troops on site. We learned that they were trying to treat a badly injured driver. The tactical operations center went into full crisis mode. As the battle captain tried to apprise me of the situation, two more urgent calls came in back-to-back. Helicopters from 1-1 CAV



DOD

The lead tank of 1-1 Cavalry crosses the Sava River, December 1995.

reported being painted by SA 6 radar, and then 2-3 Field Artillery reported that counter-fire radar had identified several rounds impacting near our only checkpoint. Everyone was in an uproar. I coached the battle captain on questions to ask. First: "Can the cavalry identify the approximate locations of the SA 6 radar?" They could: "Croatia near Vukovar." "O.K., they are unlikely to shoot, so continue the mission." Second: "Can the cavalry with the platoon on the checkpoint ask whether the Soldiers on the scene had experienced any impacts?" They could, and the answer was "no." "O.K., no threat." All of this took a minute or so and gave all of us a chance to calm down. Then we turned our full attention to the real problem: we had a Soldier wounded, and we did not know where he was.

Nash and I spoke several times as he searched for the injured Soldier and his unit. When he found them, he personally led the medical evacuation effort. Nash and the troops on the ground got the wounded Soldier on the general's helicopter and flew north to a combat surgical hospital that had moved into position near Zupanja. Meanwhile, the remaining MPs backtracked to the hard-surfaced road and returned to the brigade area.

Not every day in Bosnia was like this, but many of them were. We found mines the hard way 13 times. We had shooting incidents, civilians killed or injured in minefields, national elections, visitors up to and including the secretary of state and the secretary of defense, and a host of problems that always seemed to happen simultaneously. Our leaders and Soldiers learned a lot that day about each other, about their general, and about thinking and communicating clearly under stress. We also relearned what we already knew: a brigade headquarters has to manage more than one event at a time, and the events will likely be dissimilar.

To add to our challenges, brigades then were normally not expected to run complex civil-military operations, but that is what all the brigades assigned to Multi-National Division-North (MND-North) did nearly every day in Bosnia. Moreover, each did so in trace with units they had never operated with and until 1995 had no reason to believe they ever would. MND-North controlled 1st and 2d Brigades of the 1st Armored Division as well as a Nordic-Polish brigade, a Russian parachute brigade, and a Turkish brigade. None of this would have worked well with-

out the Partnership for Peace program or without great effort on all sides. The command and control arrangements would have seemed murky even to bureaucrats in the Byzantine Empire. Major General Nash commanded only the American units. He had NATO tactical control of NATO units. For the other units, including those provided by Sweden, Poland, Russia, and several Baltic countries, the rules varied according to specific agreements reached by NATO and the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, who had "ultimate" authority for IFOR.

These arcane relationships mattered to all of us because we shared unit boundaries, conducted joint patrols, and provided support to each other as required. The Nordic-Polish brigade, for example, deployed without artillery, so a battery from 2-3 Field Artillery supported them. First Brigade conducted joint patrols with the Russians on our right and collaborated with the Nordic-Polish brigade to clear mines from roads. In April, a Hungarian snow plow platoon arrived. At various times French and British units supported the brigade as well. Italian rail troops proofed the rail line used to transport bulk fuel from storage areas established in the brigade's sector, and everyone who needed to get into northeastern Bosnia via the Sava River bridge used MSR Arizona, which transited 1st Brigade's area of operations.

First Brigade learned to accommodate differences in perceptions among each of these units. Sometimes our insights amounted to epiphanies. For example, my colleague from the Russian brigade and I worked hard to get to know each other and to learn how to operate with each other. We began on 15 November 1995, when I briefed him my concept for the mission at my headquarters in Kirchgoens. I had a moment of incredible disorientation when the first chart came up on the screen. In the lower left corner the classification read, *Secret U.S.-Russian Eyes Only*. It hit me then that those of us in the room were participating in a historic moment: the first meeting since 1945 of regimental-level commanders from the United States and Russia to coordinate a real-world mission. However surreal things seemed then and later in Bosnia, all of us worked through it by seeking common ground and seeing past our personal and professional histories. The Russian brigade commander, "Sasha" Lentsov, always proved to be as good as his word, and his brigade's soldiers worked well with mine.

Although in the early days we performed mostly military tasks, we also had to undertake important civil-military missions, including the mundane business of coordinating with the mayor and local military authorities in Zupanja, dealing with Croatian railroad officials to download trains, and contracting with businesses for services. Among the first meetings we had on the south side of the Sava were conferences with the mayors of some of the towns in the brigade's area of responsibility (AOR). We also socialized with our counterparts. For example, on Christmas Day 1995, Lieutenant Colonel Stone had dinner with the Croat mayor of Ravne Brcko, on whose turf we expected to site the brigade headquarters.

To cope with the civil-military linkages essential to success, the division assigned civil affairs, psychological operations, and public affairs detachments to the brigade. The brigade legal team helped us understand what the Dayton Accords required of the factions, the various international agencies, and us, and what we could and could not do. The Accords provided detailed guidance concerning military tasks, but they were less explicit for the nonmilitary aspects of the treaty. In the beginning, most of us assumed that the International Police Task Force, the Office of the High Representative, various UN organizations, and others would arrive soon after we did to begin the much more difficult task of restoring civil order, getting the economy moving, and developing systems to restore trust and confidence.

In retrospect, it is difficult to plumb the depths of our naïveté. To begin with, few of the organizations we would come to work with closely had even hired the staff they required. The Office of the High Representative, led by Carl Bildt, who had the lead for the entire effort, lacked even a roof under which to operate. In fact, the international community built its teams on the fly. Consequently, the heart of the effort to execute the Accords' intent lagged behind the military effort by months.

It seems obvious now, though it wasn't then, that we would be on our own for some time. In practice, this meant that we moved from crisis to crisis, struggling to stay ahead and to anticipate what the next crisis might be. Although the division managed to get to Bosnia more rapidly than the civilians with whom (and in many cases, for whom) we worked,

we, too, arrived incrementally. First Armored Division entered Bosnia at a rate that could be sustained across a single lane bridge that required daily maintenance.⁹ The brigade started crossing by barge on 19 December, but the final units—the long-awaited and eagerly anticipated support units of the 501st FSB—did not close until the end of February.

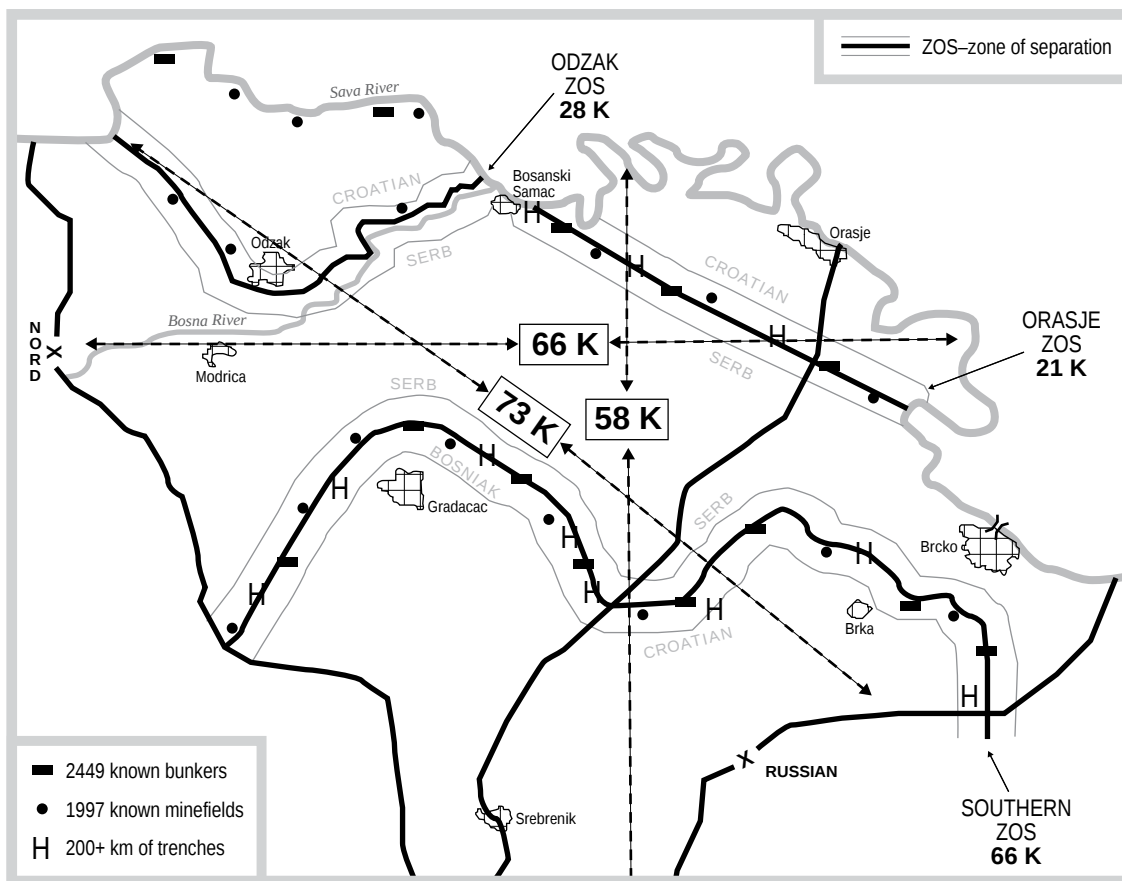
Consequently, the brigade (and for that matter, the division) had too few troops to execute required missions. Although it is fashionable now to claim that noncontiguous, nonlinear operations offer the best of all possible worlds, this claim does not consider fully the term's implications.

In Bosnia, the division and brigade support areas lay at the center of a circle, with the combat formations in wedge-shaped areas assigned to the brigades. Just getting established proved difficult. The conditions on the ground further exacerbated these problems: Bosnia is a beautiful country, but it is mostly rugged hills cut by streams, and in 1995, very few of the bridges over these streams remained intact. The roads, too, were few; almost all of them had only two lanes; and near the confrontation lines, the faction armies had mined, cut, or barricaded them. The weather compounded our problems. Rain or snow bounded by short periods of hard freeze characterized the first three months of 1995. To make it even more interesting, the factions had laid millions of mines in thousands of minefields, most of them unmarked. In many of the fields that were marked, the opposition had laid mines inside the lanes the owners had left open.

By the end of our nearly 12 months in Bosnia, 1st Brigade had identified or stumbled into some 1,800 minefields along and outside 200 kilometers of trenches and field fortifications. Although the largest field had fewer than 100 mines, and most had fewer than 50, that still meant we faced about one million mines, ranging from antipersonnel mines to large (1,000-pound) maritime mines.¹⁰

Finally, getting into our AOR and operating within it required us to establish facilities and communications. Obviously, we needed to be as close to the confrontation lines as possible, and we needed to be on all sides of the lines.

To understand what Bosnia was like in 1995, imagine West Virginia with minefields, many of its towns reduced to rubble, and refugees living under horrendous conditions in the midst of a brutal civil



1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, area of responsibility.

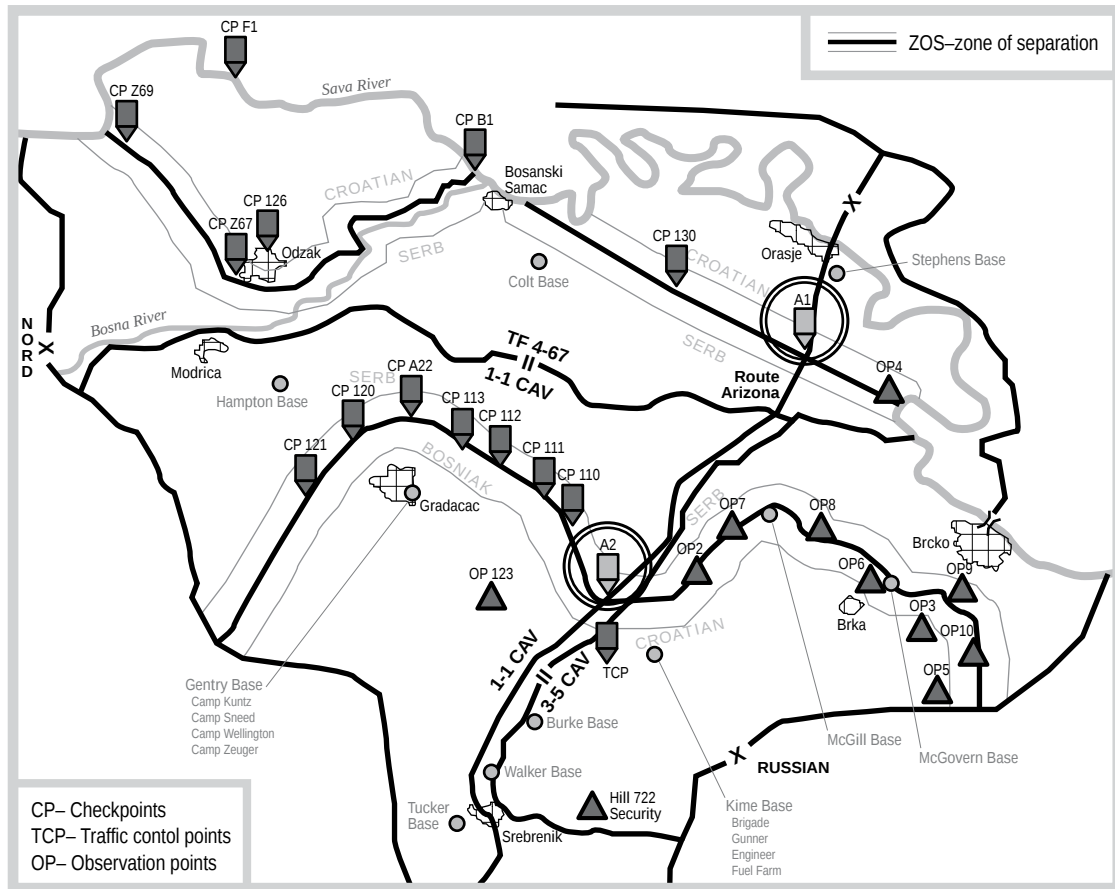
war. Finding places to operate and establishing communications required imagination, persistence, and hard work. We strove to meet the guidelines stipulated by V Corps: a few large base camps. In practice, however we couldn't do that and get the mission done. At one point, we had 16 base camps or operating sites, some as small as a single platoon perched on a hilltop to defend a communications site, and 5 large base camps of 800 to 1,000 Soldiers and a few civilians.

We sited our base camps in accordance with a few simple guidelines. They should—

- Be astride a main avenue of approach that had been tactically or operationally significant during the war.
- Be as close as possible to the confrontation lines.
- Ensure a presence among all the factions (to show impartiality).
- Avoid occupying private residences to minimize disruption for returning inhabitants.

- Involve land with clear legal title that we could place under contract.

In choosing our sites, we sought the advice and support of both the civilian and military leaders in the area. Some of the sites did not look at all promising when we moved in. In January 1996, I met Lieutenant Colonel Cucolo to see the site he proposed for his base camp. He had chosen an abandoned collective farm that lay astride the main avenue of approach from Brcko to Brka over which some of the fiercest fighting in the Posavina had occurred. The site lay literally across the zone of separation, among mines and unexploded ordnance. The ground was marshy and only five kilometers from the Sava River, just south of Brcko. Frankly, I could see no advantage in it, except that it met all the criteria laid out in the guidance. I told Cucolo to go ahead because, despite my misgivings, I could see he was right. The Black Knights, supported by the 23d Engineers, Seabees from the 130th Naval Mobile Construction Battalion, and a host of local



1st Brigade checkpoint and observation point original locations.

contractors, cleared the mines and built Camp McGovern, named for a Black Knight who had won the Medal of Honor in Korea.

As all of this proceeded apace, we worked to separate the combatants. Almost from the beginning, the solution to “how to do” this seemed best arrived at in collaboration with the combatants. On my first crossing of the Sava, I had accompanied Brigadier General O’Neal to the headquarters of the Orasje Corps, in Orasje. There we met with the Croatian Defense Force commander in the so-called Orasje pocket. He claimed that he would meet his obligations and introduced me to the officer who would serve as his liaison to 1st Brigade. In the next few days, I met the commanders of all of the other factions, including all nine brigade commanders of the Bosnian-Serb East Bosnia Corps. At that session, I suggested that the smart way to separate forces was for them to develop the solution. In the end, with some coaching, all three factions agreed to a simultaneous relief in sector of their positions by 1st Brigade units.

We hammered out the details while shivering in a poorly heated tent set up in the ruins of a restaurant in the middle of the planned zone of separation alongside MSR Arizona. Each of the brigade’s battalions marshaled units from the factions and, in a matter of days, cleared 42 routes through the zone of separation. To do this, the battalions organized mine-proofing teams built around mine-roller tanks and combat engineer vehicles, with medics in support. The factions, each on their side, cleared out mines until they reached each other. We then proofed the routes. Subsequently, we established checkpoints in stages and assumed responsibility for the zone. Together, 1st Brigade and the factions established the zone of separation by 16 January, as the Accords stipulated. Although conceived at the top and organized using the Joint Military Commission process established by the Accords, this operation depended on company commanders, usually paired with faction brigade commanders.

By the end of February 1996, the factions had learned to stay out of the zone of separation at the



DOD

Tough conditions: snow and ice cover a 1-1 CAV M3 Bradley manning a checkpoint during Operation Joint Endeavor, February 1996. SSG Ron Clendenen is in the turret.

cost of several hundred confiscated weapons and a number of incidents. However, the pace of operations did not slow down; in fact, in some ways it picked up, as we turned to destroying bunkers and burying trenches based on the theory that if we did so we made it very hard for the factions to become bellicose. The absence of fighting positions coupled with the combatants' obvious exhaustion would, I believed, make it hard for them to fight each other—or us. It also became apparent to me that the brigade needed to effect the next transition. In the early stages, I directed operations from the top with the battalions executing as they saw fit within the parameters of my guidance. I had always planned to move from centrally directing operations to affording my talented battalion commanders far greater leeway to decide for themselves what they needed to do and how to do it.

Some of them might argue that I waited too long. What I can say for sure is that sometime in February, I realized it was time to turn over daily operations to the battalion commanders and begin thinking further ahead—they knew what to do and didn't need me looking over their shoulders. Instead, I would focus on setting conditions for their success and considering what our future requirements would be.

I also felt that I needed to look at how we operated to ensure it made sense. We had not developed standard operating procedures for doing tasks that had become routine. For example, in conventional operations, units are tracked on maps using icons. That approach made little sense when executing

stability operations. Stone's staff developed a mission tracking system for 1-1 CAV that we applied throughout the brigade. It was a matrix that listed every departure from base camps, its tasks, its routes, and its estimated times of return. With it, the brigade and subordinate units could effectively track all activities in their sectors using a uniform approach that everyone understood. Since we routinely had as many as 120 separate activities going on outside the wire, a standardized system for tracking them made sense.

To acquire an understanding of long-term issues, I asked De Graff to develop a campaign plan focused on the brigade's main effort, Brcko. In about two weeks, he and his staff produced a plan based on several "engagements" designed to establish conditions that would enable the brigade to meet the Dayton Accords' military requirements and to anticipate the kind of support we would have to provide to civilian agencies. We also needed some useful means to gauge progress toward our goals. Assessing military operations proved easy, because the specified military tasks could be assessed objectively, mostly in terms of yes or no. For example, all faction troops in cantonments by such-and-such a day—yes or no. On the civil side, however, we had no set date for the return of those who had fled the killing and no means of identifying rightful owners of property. On the other hand, we could see that each of the factions had housed people in homes they freely admitted belonged to someone else—specifically, to someone else from a rival ethnic group.

De Graff's campaign planning led us to conclude that the economy and reconciliation (or at least accommodation) would prove decisive in making things work in Bosnia. The plan envisioned building where we could on the connections the leaders of the factions had between them. For example, all three of the protagonists who claimed to be "the" mayor of Brcko knew each other. Two had served on the faculty of the local college and the third had served in what amounted to the city council. The



Courtesy of author

A U.S. convoy clears a checkpoint, February 1996.

soldiers all knew each other as well. In practice, this meant that despite three years of bitter civil war, there were informal relationships to exploit. As a practical matter, finding ways to make the roads safe, promoting economic ties, and determining how we would deal with the planned arbitration of Brcko's future loomed among the most important intermediate objectives of our campaign. Necessarily, how we made decisions at and within the brigade would change fundamentally, from addressing immediate tactical requirements to developing long-term approaches or lines of operation (although we did not use this term) to guide decentralized decision making down to the companies and often to the platoons.

To get at these two objectives, we attempted to advance on several lines of operation. These included holding police forces responsible for the safety of "everyone's" citizens, working with the local military to return detained motorists, working with the civil authorities on possible means of cooperation, and assessing the economic needs of the communities in our AOR. Writing about this is much easier than doing it. To make any headway at all, the brigade had to work with three different police forces: the International Police Task Force (IPTF) when it arrived in sufficient numbers, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and UN Civil Affairs (UN CIV A). There were others, but these were the ones we coordinated or collaborated with most often.

All of our efforts assumed some risk. For example, at one point the police forces of the factions became such a problem that the commander of the Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps forbade the police forces to leave their barracks until

the IPTF had trained and certified them to assume their duties. First Brigade had to force the closure of one police station, an action that included confiscating some 48 automatic weapons. Taking weapons from people who do not wish to give them up is an exciting proposition. To do so without loss of life, we most often employed surprise and overwhelming force. In time, all of the units of 1st Armored Division developed and refined similar techniques. Almost from the beginning of our tour in Bosnia, our tactics for managing everything from weapons seizures to ugly crowds included isolating the site as soon as possible.

In late summer of 1996, the division formalized the tactical process. The resulting mantra included "isolate, dominate, attack at all echelons, and mass." Isolating a problem speaks for itself. "Dominate" and "mass" are about retaining the initiative and bringing more than adequate forces to bear. "Attack at all echelons" meant just that. The moment an incident developed, units reported left, right, and higher so that everyone knew what was happening. This enabled every echelon, up to and including IFOR headquarters, to call military and/or civilian faction leaders, to marshal resources, and to head off other problems. Very few things happened in Bosnia by accident. Nearly every incident either stemmed from an effort to make political capital or provided an opportunity for a faction to make political capital. Responding energetically and assuring rapid and accurate reporting enabled us to minimize or prevent problems.

There is much more to say (on supporting elections, working to clear mines, restoring some commercial enterprise, and spontaneously developing the "Arizona Market"), but these tales will have to

be told elsewhere. Instead, one final vignette must serve to illustrate the essence of command during stability operations. Arguably, the essence of command in any environment is creativity coupled with the ability to envision an end state, communicate that vision clearly, assign resources, and supervise execution. For me and for the 1st Brigade generally, that essence was the formation of an informal organization we called the Posavina Working Group.

By the spring of 1996, each of the three maneuver battalions had established close ties with community leaders and found ways to help them begin to restore “normal” conditions. Cucolo met on a regular basis with the political and military leaders of the Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats. Stone (and his successor, Lieutenant Colonel Tim Cherry) chaired meetings in Gradacac, at his base, or in Modrica, where the local Serb and Bosnian leadership met. Lieutenant Colonel Anderson held meetings in the northern part of the brigade’s area, where Croatian civil and military leaders from Orasje and Odzak met with their Serb counterparts from Bosanki Samac. All of this proved useful and resulted in small steps, including Serbs providing water to Bosnians in or near Brcko (for a fee). Similarly, the power plant in Modrica sold electricity to Croats in Odzak.

None of this enabled the Posavina to compete effectively for the resources required to get things

moving and to sustain progress. Equally important, none of the organizations from the international community, to include the World Bank and our own U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), had the means or the staff to assess projects and assign priorities. In some cases, important projects were overlooked while others had more than one sponsor. In July 1996, after having survived several ugly moments in and around Brcko when Bosnians returned to the area to rebuild their homes, the brigade was drifting a bit. In the wake of my conscious choice to decentralize operations, the efforts we were making lacked overarching coherence. In short, we had outrun our headlights and, despite planning for a transition, we had missed one.

Anderson made all of this apparent in a discussion following a meeting with one of the factions. Anderson (who essentially outlined the thoughts in the preceding two paragraphs) observed that someone needed to “bring it together.” Without explicitly naming me as the culprit, he led me to the conclusion that if I waited any longer for someone else to take the reins for the Posavina, it would be too late. I was dumbfounded. He was absolutely right. He had seen what I had not seen, but should have: If not the brigade, then who? If not now, then when? This seemed obvious—after he made the case.

Based on Anderson’s polite but firm boot in the backside, De Graff and I planned and coordinated a meeting for the key players in the international community organizations who operated in the Posavina. Ultimately, we met in July or August of 1996 at our semipermanent Joint Military Commission site (a tent with a floor astride MSR Arizona). We had a very good turnout, including representatives from the IPTF, UNHCR, UN CIV A, USAID, the European Union Customs Monitors, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the World Bank, and several others. Most important, the regional Office of the High Representative (OHR) attended and represented Carl Bildt. We did not



U.S. forces removing debris in Brcko, spring 1996.

U.S. Army

invite any of the factions to this session, but brought them in subsequently. Together, we hammered out a vision for what we called the Posavina Working Group. The vision was straightforward:

- Continued progress toward full implementation of the Dayton Accords, including full compliance with the military annex of the treaty and impartial support for reconstruction of the infrastructure and the integrated economic development underway.
- Right of return respected by all parties.
- Economic and social integration of the Brcko arbitration results.
- Use of the Posavina Corridor as a model for the rest of the country and as a tool for joining entities with each other and neighboring countries in accordance with West European standards.

To this vision, we added subordinate directions or categories addressing compliance, infrastructure, and reconciliation. Where possible, the group agreed to assign responsibility or a lead agency.

The Posavina Working Group provided coherence and direction to the efforts of all. Although none of the group's nonmilitary members had the luxury of focusing exclusively on the Posavina, we in the 1st Brigade could. For that reason alone, the group paid dividends to those who lived there. They had an advocate—1st Brigade—and we had a lever to use with our colleagues elsewhere. We also benefited from the issues and ideas that others broached in the working group. For example, the UNHCR pointed out that although Brcko remained bifurcated by overlapping factional entities, the records of everyone who had lived there remained in the city. This allowed us to obtain and use the personal records that regular people needed to get on with their lives. I also believe that our working group enabled the Posavina to compete successfully for important projects, including a power transformer and several other works that helped restore basic infrastructure.

In the months after forming the working group, the brigade undertook several important tasks and endured more than one crisis. We supported national elections and the safe return of more than 300 families to their homes, enabled cooperation between police forces, found the means to support many small projects under U.S.-sponsored aid programs, supported nongovernmental organizations where able, survived an accidental bombing by a Navy

F-14, and dealt with small incidents too numerous to mention. Finally, we redeployed while supporting the units that relieved us in place. Among other things, we gave our relief training and a graduation “exercise.”

We all came to understand that when the scenario makes it impossible to win, you've got to change the rules. We adapted daily as the situation changed, and it changed daily. As I believe many of the Soldiers did, I came away from the experience with the view that serving in Bosnia was difficult but rewarding. For me, it was easily the best year of more than 28 in uniform.

What I learned in Bosnia seemed to me, at the time at least, to validate the Army's view of how to equip, train, and man the U.S. Army. The 1993 edition of FM 100-5, *Operations*, specified quite clearly that Army units had to be able to move up and down the continuum of operations, from full-fledged combat to MOOTW. Consistent with that view, the Army continued to focus on “general purpose” forces which, although optimized for combat operations, could, with training specific to the environment, operate anywhere along the continuum on short notice—like the interval between August and December 1995.

That made sense to me then, and it still does now. In December 1995, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, entered Bosnia with a tank task force, a mechanized task force, a cavalry squadron, and combat support and service support units. By the time the brigade redeployed, it had gone through several task organizations, adding and dropping units as diverse as Seabee battalions and U.S. Marine Corps unmanned-aerial-vehicle ground-station detachments. In the fall of 1996, the Bandits redeployed home. In their stead, the brigade received the 519th MP battalion, which gave up one company to the Black Knights and received a mechanized company team in direct support. This is what brigades do: they receive and give up units based on mission analysis as conditions and missions change.

Brigades exist to devise solutions to problems assigned by higher headquarters. This requires the capability to plan and execute operations by integrating and combining arms. That was so in Bosnia, and it remains so today. To be effective, officers who command brigades must be tactically

and technically proficient, but they must also be able to tolerate and even thrive in conditions of uncertainty or when the benefits of effective solutions are more than a little ambiguous. They must be able to communicate in both the send and receive modes. They must be amenable, too, to taking risks along the way with the expectation that sometimes they will fail. Mitigating risk is sound; avoiding risk is not.

Finally, above all else, the brigade and its units must be able to adapt. This trait stems from con-

fidence, tolerance of ambiguity, and hard training. Brigades must be able to reequip and retrain according to missions they are assigned. Indeed, that is just what we did in Bosnia—including reequipping tank and infantry platoons with HMMWVs when it made sense to do so.

On the other hand, adaptable units and commanders find ways to do what they must with the equipment at hand and in the conditions in which they find themselves. That, to me, is the moral of this story. **MR**

NOTES

1. Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1999). Ambassador Holbrooke's account of the road to peace, however self-serving, is the standard for understanding how peace did come to the Posavina. His achievement is real; however, his criticism of those of us in IFOR who carried the ball for the country is unsupported, unfair, and unreasonable.

2. There are two very good narratives on this topic that consider the Army in Europe. Richard M. Swain's *Army Command in Europe During the Time of Peace Operations: Tasks Confronting USAREUR Commanders, 1994-2000* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2003) tells the story from the perspective of the Army's senior headquarters for Europe. Swain's account is concise and fast-paced, despite having to address esoteric staffing issues and the challenges of operating in Europe at the service component command level, where the commander wore at least three hats at all times, including service component commander; commander in chief and commanding general of U.S. Army Europe; NATO commander as commanding general of Allied Forces Central Europe; and theater Army commander as commanding general of 7th U.S. Army.

3. See Charles E. Kirkpatrick, *Ruck It Up* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2006), 463-70.

4. Since the Black Knights had just returned from supporting the UN mission in Macedonia, they did not deploy to Bosnia that summer. Instead, they rested, retrained, and prepared for a Partnership for Peace mission, which they executed in early August.

5. This definition reflects my interpretation of doctrine and stems directly from a discussion with the V Corps historian and my very good friend, Charles E. Kirkpatrick. Sadly, Dr. Kirkpatrick passed away in October 2005.

6. See Mike Jones, "The 'Iron Dukes' Supporting Operation Joint Endeavor," (Monograph, Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College [USAWC], 1999), 18.

7. Lieutenant Colonel Tony Cucolo was so taken with the implicit cynicism in the idea that it was "just a footnote" that he used it as the title of his U.S. Army War College paper on his experience leading the Black Knights in Bosnia. See Tony Cucolo, "Just a Footnote: Task Force 3-5 Goes to Bosnia," (Monograph, Carlisle Barracks, PA: USAWC, 1998).

8. For an excellent account of the great work done by the engineers, see Don C. Young, "The Sava River Bridge Mission: The Opening Mission for Operation Joint Endeavor in Bosnia," (Monograph, Carlisle Barracks, PA: USAWC, undated).

9. This is not literally the whole truth, since Colonel (later Major General) John Batiste brought his headquarters in via Belgrade, then moved into Bosnia without having to transit the bridgehead, as did the Russian brigade. The Nordic-Polish brigade formed around units already in country as part of UN-mandated forces. The Turks also transitioned from UN troops to IFOR troops. Some troops arrived via air through Tuzla and Sarajevo, and some came overland from the Adriatic coast, but most came across the bridge over the Sava River.

10. I took this data from my operations map. MND-North established an office, the sole function of which was to track minefields and mine-clearing operations. This function proved very difficult to do, since various nongovernmental organizations came in and cleared mines without even reporting what they were doing to MND-North. Similarly, the factions often claimed to have cleared mines, but their activities weren't verified by MND-North or its assigned units. Farmers also burned their fields in the spring with the result that some mines detonated. We could never verify where these mines had been. In 1st Brigade, we reported only those mines cleared that we had verified and counted. We could verify just over 3,200 mines removed from nearly a million. When I left Bosnia, I had no idea how many minefields were actually cleared to the standard of the time: 99 percent.



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TOWARD STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Brigadier General Mari K. Eder, U.S. Army

Communicating strategically during a war on global terrorism should be an urgent part of the mission of every arm of the U.S. Government. Explaining our government's actions and policies to the peoples of the world must be a top priority.

—U.S. Department of State¹

A NUMBER OF ARTICLES in the press this past year have reported that political and military leaders are frustrated because the government does not have an integrated process for delivering “strategic communication” on issues of national importance, particularly the War on Terrorism. Frustration over the inability to coordinate and synchronize public information activities has been vented toward the Department of Defense (DOD) and the military services. Others have voiced similar worries about a lack of cohesiveness and coordination within the Department of State and the National Security Council. In short, the question of how to transform public communication channels and methods to meet the challenges posed in an era of globalized, instantaneous, and ubiquitous media has caused concern and even alarm. Moreover, many, especially in the military, are worried that our enemies have already occupied and dominated the infosphere battlespace.

Army doctrine has evolved greatly over the last three years to deal with this challenge. It acknowledges that the information domain truly is a battlespace and that acquisition of favorable media coverage supporting regional and national political objectives should be equated with seizing a form of key terrain. This view is reflected, for example, in Chapter 1 of the recently published FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, which states, “The information environment is a critical dimension of such internal wars and insurgents attempt to shape it to their advantage.”² The FM clearly recognizes that counterinsurgent operations must be equally sophisticated, flexible, and cognizant of the power of shaping information strategies.

Against such a background then, let us ask, What is strategic communication? And how does it differ from the traditional means the government has used to inform the public?

For many, distinguishing between strategic communication and other, more familiar, forms of public communication is either mysterious or problematic or both. For some, determining what constitutes strategic communication calls to mind a comment by Admiral Ernest J. King, Chief of Naval Operations, in the early days of World War II: “I don’t know what the hell this ‘logistics’ is that Marshall [Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall] is always talking

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PHOTO: Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates and commander of the U.S. Pacific Command, Admiral Timothy J. Keating, answer reporters' questions during a press conference at Headquarters, U.S. Pacific Command, 31 May 2007. (U.S. Navy, Specialist 3d Class Elisia V. Gonzales)

about, but I want some of it.”³ Many feel precisely the same about strategic communication. Although they do not know what strategic communication is or how it works, they recognize that it is new and somehow more effective than older forms of public communication—and is therefore important. One result of this situation is that the expression *strategic communication* is one of the most misused and misunderstood terms in the military lexicon.

The purpose of this article is to clarify the concept of strategic communication so that commanders at all levels can understand and exploit its benefits.

Why Strategic Communication Is Important

The principal benefit of strategic communication derives essentially from the principle of war called *mass*. Strategic communication means massing information among all agents of public information at a critical time and place to accomplish a specific objective. It avoids the destructive effects of mixed messages that result from not massing information. Dribbling out mixed, unsynchronized information instead of massing the release of unequivocal messages backed by a substantial body of facts is especially destructive during times of crisis, or when the government and military find themselves under enormous public or political pressure, fastidious public scrutiny, and emotional criticism.

Many think the U.S. Government habitually sends out mixed messages on issues of vital concern, messages in which policy is not clearly and consistently articulated or no clear justification for policy is provided. Such messages undermine confidence in U.S. policy by conveying the perception of disarray, vacillation, and weakness in the national will to any nation seeking to understand U.S. intentions. This frustrates our allies, confuses potential friends, and encourages our enemies.

Our government's view concerning the recent Supreme Court ruling on tribunals is a case in point. The administration failed to provide a unified response to the court's ruling that military tribunals are illegal. Since the administrative branch (including the departments of State, Justice, and Defense) could not or did not decide what unified message to promulgate regarding the ruling's significance to the war effort, widely different media interpretations abounded and went unchecked by a government

public information counterweight. BBC News bluntly termed the ruling a “stunning rebuff to President Bush,” and the French press generally followed a similar theme of “Supreme Court disavows Bush.” German national radio hailed the ruling as a “Victory for the Rule of Law.” Civilian news media from Spain to Italy, Pakistan, and China agreed, while the Swedish newspaper *Sydsvenskan*'s editorial writer commented, “Now the judicial power has put a check on the executive power. Thanks for that.”⁴ In contrast, the Arab press reaction was skeptical. Writing in London's *Al-Hayat* Arabic newspaper, columnist Jihad al-Khazin commented, “This was all great news, so great that it was reported by all American and international media outlets and continues to draw reactions until this very day, but none of it is true, or, if we wish to be accurate, will ever see the light of day, because on the same day that the Bush Administration declared its commitment to the Supreme Court's ruling, the Senate Judiciary Committee was holding hearings on the treatment of accused terrorists.”⁵

How to Avoid Mixed Messages

We can describe the agenda-setting function of America's free press in the same terms the U.S. Army War College uses to define strategic leadership: *telling people what to think about* instead of *telling them what to think*. Strategic communication is an essential, complementary activity to strategic leadership that manages public discourse not by attempting to tell people what to think, but by channeling information into the public information arena in an effective way. It sets the national agenda by establishing as a public priority *what the public chooses to think about*.

Strategic Communication Defined

To fully exploit strategic communication's potential to help people select what to think about, we must first distinguish it from other forms of public information and outreach programs. Doing so will help us define strategic communication, a necessary step to developing the rigorous training and education program leaders will need to enable them to focus on keeping issues of importance and the strategic messages concerning them prominently positioned in the national agenda.

Four major characteristics distinguish strategic communication from other types of public information:

- *Audience selection.* Strategic communication differs from other public information activities in that greater care is exercised in the selection of audiences in order to achieve specific purposes. This stands in contrast to traditional public affairs and public diplomacy, whose activities have been historically stovepiped—public affairs to U.S. domestic audiences, public diplomacy to foreign audiences. Moreover, most public information activities aim at broad public audiences. The Armed Forces Information Service, for example, targets the entire military community and the even broader general domestic audience interested in military affairs.

The first half of the definition of strategic communication set forth in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) Strategic Communication Execution Roadmap particularly emphasizes the importance of audience selection: “*Focused United States Government processes and efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen or preserve conditions favorable to advance national interests and policies through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs and actions integrated with other elements of national power*” (italics mine).⁶

- *Breaking down stovepipes.* The QDR roadmap definition also highlights the fact that strategic communication has a broader application than military public affairs. It calls attention to the need for formal mechanisms to compel a culture of cooperation among public information activities. In the past, public affairs, legislative affairs, outreach programs (academic, interest group, think tanks), and State Department public diplomacy essentially operated independently, within their own stovepipes, to reach different, discrete audiences. Consequently, they sometimes addressed the same issues of public concern with contradictory messages and talking points.

The characteristic that distinguishes strategic communication from the old stovepiped way of doing business is formal cooperation among communicators. Strategic communication mandates that all public information agents in the government’s business—even coalition partners—must work together.

What distinguishes strategic communication from public information is a formal methodology that deconflicts messages through careful delibera-

tion and coordination, analyzes and prioritizes key audiences, and synchronizes and times the release of information by all public information agents to their respective audiences in a disciplined fashion.

Strategic communication also offers an opportunity to foster a true culture of engagement across the Army. In turn, such a viable, active culture will drive and support the development of strategic communication as a force multiplier.

- *Public diplomacy in strategic communication.* Under-Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs Karen Hughes has identified the objectives of closer coordination and integration among various government agencies dealing with public information, and greater emphasis on developing cross-cultural capabilities. The State Department’s public diplomacy effort is transforming the way the department does business.

Advocating increased funding for programs that are working, Hughes has mentioned international exchange programs, a direct form of community outreach (albeit on a global scale). She noted, “People who come here see America, make up their own minds about us and almost always go home with a different and much more positive view of our country.”⁷

Another welcome change is that the State Department’s emerging public communication strategy acknowledges the speed of global communications. The department has set up a new rapid response center based on the successful model used by Defense Public Affairs during the kinetic phases of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The center monitors daily communications worldwide and provides a summary, along with America’s response, to diplomatic outposts. This information enables U.S. Government representatives to be more knowledgeable and responsive U.S. policy advocates. The establishment of regional hubs to position spokespersons in key media centers like Dubai ensures even greater presence and reach to key audiences in the Arab world.

The department has also given senior regional representatives such as ambassadors and foreign service officers greater freedom to reach out to foreign audiences, both directly and through the civilian news media.

And finally, the department has placed greater emphasis on using public diplomacy to shape

policy. Noting that America hasn't always adjusted its programs to make their benefits clear to average people, Hughes said the president "instructed [the department] to look at ways to make programs more effective, to set clearer goals, focus programs, partner with the private sector . . . then make sure we communicate what we are doing—a perfect example of the intersection of public diplomacy and policy."⁸

- *Rapid, comprehensive responses.* The fourth element that distinguishes strategic communication from the traditional stovepiped operations that dominate much of the government's public information system is a rapid response that employs a range of communication tools in a synchronized, comprehensive way.

Strategic communication by its very name implies execution in support of a strategy, which, in turn, implies reaching specific strategic objectives. To compete in a global conflict in which lurid visual images and political messages often drive the agenda in compressed windows of opportunity, our strategic communication must be at least as efficient and speedy as our adversaries'. To this end, we are relearning daily that "being the firstest, with the mostest" in terms of initiative is just as applicable in the infosphere as on the battlefield.

Addressing this need in a speech last year to the Council on Foreign Relations, then secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld commented on the Defense Department's view of the way ahead:

Government public affairs and public diplomacy efforts must reorient staffing, schedules and culture to engage the full range of media that are having such an impact today.

Our U.S. Central Command, for example, has launched an online communications effort that includes electronic news updates and a links campaign that has resulted in several hundred blogs receiving and publishing CENTCOM content.

The U.S. Government will have to develop the institutional capability to anticipate and act within the same news cycle. That will require instituting 24-hour press operation centers, elevating internet operations and other channels of communications to the equal status of traditional 20th century press relations. It will result in much less reliance on the traditional print press, just as the publics of the U.S. and the world are relying less on newspapers as their principal source of information.

And it will require attracting more experts in these areas from the private sector to government service. We need to consider the possibility of new organizations and programs that can serve a similarly valuable role in the War on Terror in this new century. There is no guidebook—no roadmap—to tell our hardworking folks what to do to meet these new challenges.⁹

Defense Department efforts to improve public affairs to support the new imperatives of strategic communication began in 2004 during a "tank brief" on public affairs to the service chiefs of staff. That session was the result of a continuing debate centering on commanders' frustration with an ill-defined and little-understood communications process. Following the brief, DOD began to grow a strategic communication capability and structure, one supported by the findings of the QDR. Recognizing the importance of applying strategy to communication, DOD created the position of deputy assistant secretary of defense (joint communication) (DASD(JC)) in December 2005 to "shape DOD-wide processes, policy, doctrine, organization and training of the primary communication-supporting capabilities of the Department. These include public affairs, defense support for public diplomacy, visual information, and information operations including psychological operations."¹⁰ The terms of reference for the position state that it exists to maximize DOD's capability to communicate in an aggressive, synchronized manner. The position clearly represents the first formal recognition of the need for a military communication advocate at the highest level.

One of the new DASD(JC)'s primary tasks was to improve all aspects of strategic communication by driving communications transformation in DOD and implementing decisions from the 2006 QDR. To this end, a DASD(JC) working group developed a roadmap to provide strategic direction, objectives, milestones, and metrics for success. Just as importantly, the roadmap identified program and budget implications of strategic communication initiatives.¹¹ The roadmap seeks to achieve three overarching objectives:

- Define roles and develop strategic communication doctrine for the primary communication-supporting capabilities: public affairs, information operations, military diplomacy, and defense support to public diplomacy.

- Resource, organize, train, and equip DOD's primary communication support capabilities.
- Institutionalize a DOD process in which strategic communication is incorporated in the development of strategic policy, planning, and execution.

Furthermore, to address the fundamental requirement for strategic communication to be joint as well as interdepartmental and interagency, DOD initiated new requirements for joint public affairs officers. Despite a clear need in joint, combined, and expeditionary operations for public affairs entities that have trained and worked together, there has never been a validated joint requirement for public affairs; consequently, there was no capacity. This omission laid the groundwork for failure in communicating operations that developed rapidly and in an environment more global and information-oriented than anyone had anticipated—what commanders subsequently came to expect and want had not previously been explored or described in any detailed fashion. As a result, the services were left to estimate, using their own doctrine, what they might need ad hoc. Given the situation, it should have been no surprise—though many were surprised—that capabilities did not match demands or expectations.

In addition to establishing the DASD(JC), DOD assigned formal responsibility for communication proponentcy by establishing a joint structure called the Joint Forces Command-based Joint Public Affairs Support Element (JPASE). The JPASE exists to support the integration of communications into warfighter training; to develop operational public communication doctrine, programs, and policies for the warfighter; and to give the combatant commander a rapidly deployable military public affairs capability at the beginning of an operation, when public communication is most critical and has the potential to be most effective.

The rapid and early deployment of a public affairs team in support of earthquake relief efforts in Pakistan was an early JPASE success. Within three days of the earthquake, the joint force commander had a team of operationally focused, culturally astute, professional communicators on the ground. Their presence gave the commander the ability to shape the information environment from the beginning of the operation, ensuring that actions and information fully supported U.S. intent and goals. The team's ability to tell and amplify the global story

of America's humanitarian efforts achieved the distinctly measurable effect of fostering greater understanding and more favorable views of the U.S. by international audiences.

Even as the QDR addressed the need to implement a culture of strategic communication within the DOD via the strategic communication execution roadmap, the services were beginning to make sense of a broadly but poorly defined and often little understood concept.

Working Together

The Army began to develop a strategic communication process in 2004 by establishing a strategic communication team in the Office of the Director of the Army Staff. The team's charter required it to link communications to Army strategy and priority programs, but it took nearly two years to mature the effort to the "walk" level of the "crawl, walk, run" paradigm. In April 2005, responsibility for all Army strategic communication planning and the attendant staffing and funding for contract support was transferred to the Office of the Chief of Public Affairs (OCPA). Using an enterprise approach to communications across the Army, OCPA began to develop strategic communication planning processes by building collaborative relationships with Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) strategists, subject-matter experts, and other communicators. This created the structure, culture, and focus to support development of Army strategic communication.

Another driving force was Army senior-leader focus on developing a strategic communication capability. One of HQDA's objectives was to enhance strategic communication. With staff responsibility clearly in the Army Public Affairs portfolio, the objective was to "improve, over time, the strategic approach to Army communication, as well as the framework, mechanisms, customs, capabilities, and products needed for channeling the communicative energy of the entire Army." Army communications serve as the focal point for integrating "all Army efforts interfacing with a global public and should strive to be a 'best practices' benchmark for government, military and corporate communication." Everyone in OCPA involved in this effort has understood that "innovating communication within the Army Headquarters, and across the Army, demands a change in organization

to create an enterprise approach to communication that better reflects the Army's current vision, mission, plan, and four overarching and interrelated strategies." The Army identified five lines of effort to drive this project forward: in-process, structure, culture, image enhancement, and capabilities.¹² The Strategic Communication Coordination Group moved to develop plans and products such as the "Army Communications Guide" that enhanced a variety of audiences' understanding of significant Army themes, messages, campaigns, and events.

Senior staff support for applying strategy to communications and accepting collaborative planning processes in designing major communications campaigns is growing. Making Public Affairs the Army proponent for strategic communication is serving as a sense-making device, a construct that allows us to make sense of a new idea.

The Department of the Army has nested strategic communication planning and processes in the Army's strategy for transformation and solidly

linked strategic communication to the national military strategy (Figure 1). This is significant. By beginning the hard, detailed, day-to-day work of establishing coordination and development-design processes for communication planning first at HQDA, and in the next year throughout subordinate commands, the Army has taken the initial difficult steps to build an understanding of what strategic communication is and how strategic communication planning can work.

These efforts have already paid dividends by linking communications to the Army's long-term programs and processes supporting transformation (Figure 2). As national concepts for strategic communication planning mature and DOD implementation of strategic communication processes evolves, the Army is ready to support and complement those efforts.

The Army is leading the effort to implement strategic communication throughout DOD. The coordination group process and collaborative decision-making efforts that produced solid products

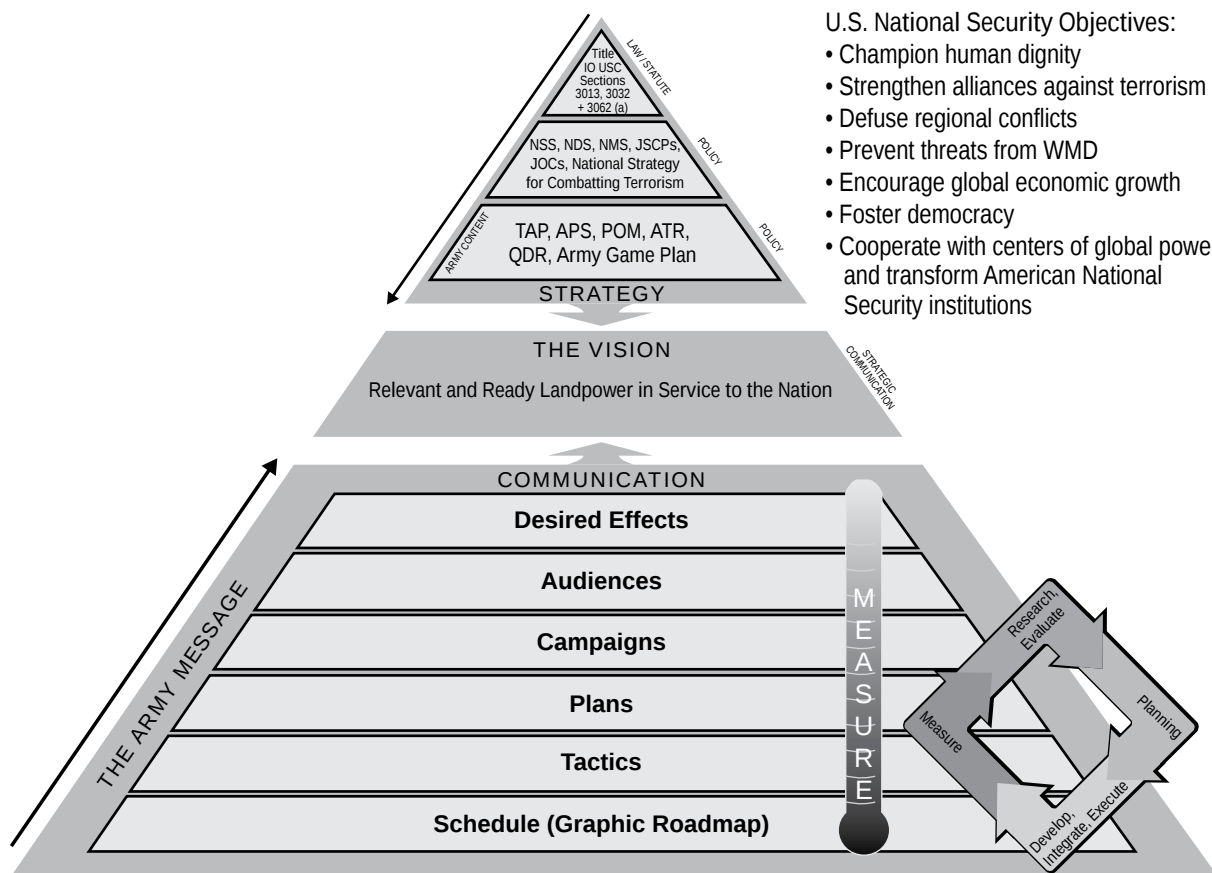


Figure 1. Army transformation and strategic communication.

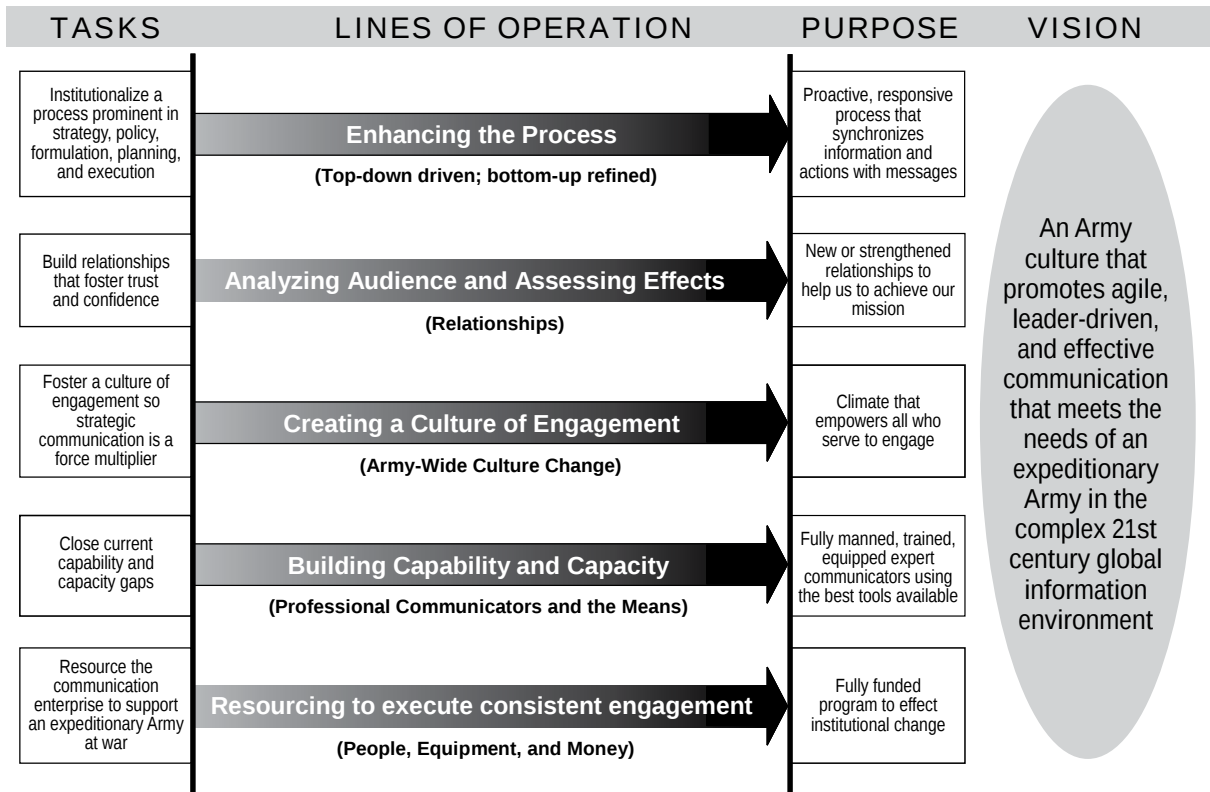


Figure 2. Strategic communication concept of operations.

have caused other organizations and activities to take a direct interest in the Army's progress. Members of OCPA's plans division have briefed the Army's process to the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, members of the Joint Staff, and the other services' communications leaders. While other activities may choose to adopt some or all of the Army's best practices, the Army is undoubtedly leading DOD's strategic communication effort forward. Even so, transforming to this new way of doing business across the Army will require significant, sustained investment in training and education at all levels in the future. Finally, for strategic communication to be successful, the Army must move the strategic communication concept of operations forward by fully resourcing the communications enterprise to support an expeditionary Army at war.

Building Strategic Communicators

More than 20 years ago, (former) Army Chief of Public Affairs Major General Patrick Brady said, "Clausewitz may not have listed information as a principle of war, but today it is, whether we like it

or not. There will be trouble if we ignore the need to inform our people and to deal with the commercial media in the planning, practice and execution of war. There is not enough training on public information in the military educational system. We are working on this issue."¹³

In some ways, it appears that not much has changed since Brady made those remarks. Some individual tasks have been added to Army officer and NCO training courses; some courses remain unchanged. On the enlisted side, Army Basic Combat Training (BCT) first included a communications task in 2001. The Army Public Affairs Center introduced this lesson to the BCT curriculum just after 9/11 and updated it in March 2005 when it added a lesson plan, "Interact with News Media."¹⁴ There is no public affairs or communications training in the Warrior Leader Course or in either the Basic or Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Courses. The first substantive training for NCOs occurs at the Sergeants Major Academy with a two-hour overview of Army public affairs followed by a capstone command post exercise in which senior NCOs participate in a media interview.

In the officer education system, the Basic Officer Leadership Course incorporates two hours of conference and discussion to train the task “Participate in a Media Interview.” A short practical exercise follows. TRADOC mandates two hours of media awareness training in all captains career courses. This training focuses on company commanders and battalion staff officers supporting media operations in their area of responsibility. The intermediate-level education course at Fort Leavenworth includes a two-hour overview of Army public affairs transformation to support current operations. Junior majors attend this year-long career course to prepare them for senior command and staff positions.

For years, the Army’s senior service college, the Army War College (AWC), held a “media day” for its resident students. The day consisted of panel discussions by members of the civilian news media, and officers were encouraged to bring their wives. It was a day of grand entertainment conducted by media celebrities and did little to further any understanding or acceptance of a commander’s responsibility to communicate or the necessity to plan for communications as a critical element of military operations. The Freedom Forum’s 1995 report on the relationship between the media and the military, *America’s Team: ‘The Odd Couple,’* scoffed at the educational value of these “media days” and recommended scrapping them. In the past few years, the AWC has, but it has not added any meaningful communications component to the core curriculum in their place. The current core curriculum does, however, contain seminar discussions and exercises about the role of the media in the strategic environment. The AWC has also incorporated communications issues into multiple elective courses, and it exercises the student’s abilities to conduct communications planning and media engagement in the course’s capstone exercise.

Public affairs has always been closely identified with media relations, because that is exactly what the Army teaches Soldiers, NCOs, and officers in Army courses. But we teach nothing about internal communications, the importance of outreach in communicating with the American people, and the need for public affairs planning in operations; and of course, there is very little about the significance of applying strategy to communications or how to do it.

“The challenge is to train the force not what to think but how to think,” Army Colonel Peter Mansoor

said in a recent interview with *The Boston Globe*. Mansoor, who led the Army and Marine Counterinsurgency Center at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, went on to say that troops must get inside the minds of both the insurgents and the citizenry. “Counterinsurgency,” he claimed, “is a thinking soldier’s war. It is graduate-level stuff. There is public relations, civil affairs, information operations. It is not easy.”¹⁵

Training and education, particularly in strategic communication, must be addressed across the force for strategic communication to succeed as an operational capability and for it to support DOD objectives in winning the battle of ideas. The Defense Information School is changing its curriculum to address the need for increased training in strategic communication, and Army Public Affairs has proposed that the Senior Leader Development Office consider strategic communication training for colonels in its evolving professional development program.

The Public Affairs Officer

The aforementioned report on media-military relations, *America’s Team: ‘The Odd Couple,’* was an extensive study that proposed detailed, exacting recommendations. It recognized the need for strategic public affairs leadership at the unified command level, stating, “In major conflicts such as Desert Storm, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should consider assigning an officer of flag or general rank in the combat theater to coordinate the news media aspects of the operation under the commander of U.S. military forces.”¹⁶ This occurred at U.S. Central Command in the early days of Operation Iraqi Freedom. As operations in the Central Command theater began to generate velocity on the international stage, it became apparent that the public affairs colonel did not have the staff muscle to serve the command at that required level. Rear Admiral Craig Quigley, a career public affairs officer, was then detailed from OSD Public Affairs to Central Command to serve as the director of public affairs. When Quigley retired, Jim Wilkinson, a White House appointee with general/flag officer-commensurate rank, was assigned to take his place. After Wilkinson left at the conclusion of major ground combat operations, Central Command looked for a civilian of his stature, experience, and connections. That search was unsuccessful, and the Central Command public

affairs effort slowly began to revert to its pre-war configuration and capability.

By the summer of 2004, Central Command's public affairs staff had changed drastically, from a staff of 70 headed by a general officer or civilian equivalent, to a staff of barely 10. The office remained functional despite having to split operations between Tampa and Qatar; however, such a small staff was unable to deal with the tempo of communications requirements, nationally and internationally, that had increased since the end of the conflict. This was not due to a lack of proficiency on the part of the staff; rather, it was a direct result of the immense, continuing demands of the global information environment.

Information operations, as a communications capability, began to expand to fill that void, although later the overlap in mission sets was largely resolved with an expanded staff in the Public Affairs Office. Public Affairs generated a strategic communication approach for reaching American, allied, and Iraqi audiences and initiated an aggressive communications outreach focus.

Since then, Central Command's public affairs operation has made significant strides, from responding rapidly to negative media pieces, to establishing a satellite office in Dubai's media city, to creating a team to monitor and respond to commentary in the blogosphere. Public affairs professionals from all services have been responsible for tremendous innovation.

The Army public affairs officer is grounded in the operational Army by initial service as a Soldier, leader, commander, and staff officer. Once entering the communications career field, this pentathlete can provide a broad range of communications capabilities to a commander. Public affairs officers typically manage portfolios that span the full spectrum of information delivery, from internal product development, to staff participation in the military decision-making process, to outreach innovation, legislative liaison, crisis communications, speech-writing, communications operations, and strategic communication planning.

Army public affairs officers are leaders, spokespersons, Army champions, cultural translators, force advocates, strategic communication planners, independent thinkers, and operational decision-makers. Future plans are to broaden their experience base

to ensure they are agile, flexible, culturally aware, sophisticated with emerging communications technologies, and savvy in dealing with all types of media. In addition, the notion of broadening career experiences for all Army officers is expanding through the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational opportunities program. An officer with this broad skill set can also pursue opportunities in recruiting or marketing, or as a legislative liaison, strategist, scholar, or interagency fellow.

The Army recognizes that its communications officers need to be more broadly capable, culturally aware, and able to operate in volatile, uncertain, and stressful information environments. Those who choose the public affairs career field must understand this reality. Following DOD's lead, Army Public Affairs proponenty is reviewing career paths, training, and education for all its public affairs officers. For example, advanced degree opportunities are much broader. They now include such disciplines as mass communications, strategic communication, diplomacy, international relations, and public administration.

Vision

Strategic communication as a concept is logical and ripe for development. We can build a solid, meaningful, and responsive national capability to communicate policy around such a concept. At the national level, our greatest asset is the recognition that from the seat of government, we must tie communications to national strategy and policy. Strategic communication is evolving as a process. It was of necessity born in collaboration and integrated into every operation emanating from the national security strategy of the United States. Within the executive branch of government, we must be able to communicate consistently and clearly with America's allies and foes and with international audiences across the world stage. We must remove the haze of suspicion born of mixed, changing, or incomplete messages.

In DOD, our most promising efforts are the evolving QDR roadmap and ongoing efforts to organize, equip, train, and support change in the communications field while educating the force about the broad range of capabilities this joint field can offer the joint commander. Strategic communication is not public affairs, but what it brings to public affairs is the strategic tie, focus, and structure.

In the Army, the advent of strategic communication represents the resurrection of a small, historically marginalized career field providing both challenge and opportunity for sophisticated career communications professionals. The door is open for these pentathletes to fulfill the need for strategic communication planning, to teach awareness and broaden the communications capabilities across the Army, and to provide strong communications support to the warfighter at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. This is the potential for strategic communication: to offer insight and understanding about how to apply information as a formidable element of national power.

The term *strategic communication* acknowledges the need to create communications with forethought, insight, and ties to national strategy and U.S. Government policy objectives. It is logical that career public affairs officers who have the training, experience, capabilities, and potential to make it successful should lead it.

Former Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense Larry DiRita said the headache of transformation is worth it. Said DiRita, "The old-fashioned idea that you develop the policy and then pitch it over the transom to the communicator is over. You're continually thinking about communication throughout the course of the policy development process."¹⁷

Contrary to the view of some, strategic communication can be mastered operationally, its effectiveness can be measured, and it is distinctly different from other, more limited forms of public communication. However, one consequence of the priority strategic communication places on working together, not separately, to manage the release of public information has been culture shock in both the government and the media. This shock has led to many emotional arguments about whether such coordinated communication has converted government information provided as a public service into propaganda meant to manipulate not just our adversaries' perceptions, but our own people's as well.

In a purely academic sense, providers of public information and purveyors of propaganda use similar if not identical communication tools (personal outreach, print media, electronic media, and computer communications). However, we must acknowledge that the government has a vital interest in political advocacy during a global conflict, and that global-

ization has changed the rules of public information dissemination. In an environment in which information travels instantaneously across national borders, when does simple prose aimed at providing public information become propaganda? Many question the legality of disseminating information to foreign audiences that clearly advocates on behalf of U.S. Government policy positions when the same information ends up in American media channels, but such objections are unrealistic because all language inescapably both informs and influences.

The domestic media and other wary elements of the U.S. population fear that the coordinated use of powerful instruments of public communication and language will result in political domination through manipulation of the populace. This is not an unwarranted concern. Consequently, the formulation of definitions that describe and differentiate types of communication, some of which could potentially be unethical, goes to the heart of the morals and ethics that underpin our constitution and democratic values—with direct implications for the information system the government uses to inform the U.S. public and the world. As the strategic communication process evolves and matures within the military and the U.S. Government, such serious concerns will continue to surface. Unfortunately, there is no easy resolution in sight. **MR**

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FOCUSING TRAINING The Big Five for Leaders

Colonel Jeffrey R. Sanderson, U.S. Army,
and Captain Scott J. Akerley, U.S. Army

FEW PLACES IN our Army today train Soldiers with as much intensity as our mobilization stations. With about 184,000 National Guard and Reserve Soldiers deployed to combat theaters of operation worldwide (60,000 in Iraq), mobilization training is at the forefront of the War on Terrorism.¹ Training these Soldiers is a decisive mission. Without their contributions, our Army—not to mention our strategic goals—would collapse.

Preparing for this war is not getting any less intensive, even as our Army gains experience. In fact, as combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have evolved in complexity and criticality, training requirements for units and Soldiers deploying to these theaters have increased. We are in a war of adjustments. We take emerging insights and lessons learned and incorporate them into our training with remarkable speed and accuracy.

While we in the 4th Cavalry Brigade train all applicable leader tasks during the mobilization cycle, we place special emphasis on five areas we call “The Big Five for Leaders.” The focus areas are—

- Troop-leading procedures (TLPs).
- Intelligence preparation of the environment (IPE).
- Ground assault convoys (GACs).
- Fire distribution and control (FDC).
- Counterinsurgency (COIN) tactics.

Based on personal experience, observation, and countless discussions and interviews with returning Soldiers, we believe these are the five areas leaders must master to enable their units to execute successful sustained combat operations.

We focus our Observer/Controller/Trainer certification program on these areas. Each of these critical skill sets is doctrinally important, easily taught, and provides immediate feedback. Old Soldiers will claim the “Big Five” are simply leader basics and should be givens. In our experience, however, they have not been ingrained in the leaders we train.

To those of you who believe strongly in cause-and-effect relationships, we say all tactical failure comes from the leader’s failure to integrate and execute the “Big Five.” We can teach skills in these areas in a classroom, but frankly, they are worthless until the chain of command practices them repeatedly in the field. Thus, we integrate them fully into all our training. Every mobilizing battalion executes a minimum 10-day Army Training and Evaluation Program (ARTEP) exercise during which we not only emphasize these leader focus areas, but also create opportunities for multiple applications in as realistic and time-constrained an environment as possible.

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Captain Scott Akerley is the 4th Cavalry Brigade planner. He holds a bachelor’s degree from the United States Military Academy and is a graduate of the Armor Officer Basic and Advanced Courses. He was a tank and scout platoon leader in Operation Iraqi Freedom I and is currently awaiting company command.

We all want to serve in good units with good leaders. Those officers and NCOs who embrace the five focus areas early in their training earn their Soldiers' trust and build sound reputations as high-quality leaders; their units improve dramatically. Those leaders who do not get the "Big Five" receive more time and attention and further training opportunities.

Troop-leading procedures are the foundation for all company-level and below planning and preparation. Once we ingrain their use as "the methodology," and they become routine, we see a significant improvement in time management throughout the unit and an increased emphasis on and attention to detail during pre-combat checks and inspections.

Intelligence preparation of the environment (previously called intelligence preparation of the battlefield, or IPB) appears to be a lost art in our digital, computerized age. The ability to "feel" a map and predict potential enemy locations is a critical leader task, but often overlooked, probably because our deployed units believe that they will learn and come to know the terrain they have to operate in. Yet, we are taking casualties inflicted by a "new enemy on old ground." Complacency is always our enemy, but by ingraining IPE as a critical leader task, we mitigate the risk of overlooking the terrain.

All in-theater movement is tactical movement. We use the term *ground assault convoy*, or GAC,

to describe movement across, through, and around the operating environment. Although we plan GACs using TLPs, the actual conduct of a convoy requires the utmost in leader attention and skills. A GAC is battle-drill-based and requires "tactical thinking leaders" who are well versed in battle drills and prepared for simultaneous multiple forms of enemy contact.

FDC is the most underrated leader task in our Army. All Soldiers must know their weapons control status and posture. This is especially true in a COIN environment. Disciplined units control their fires. All Soldiers know their weapon system capabilities and limitations and the rules for escalation of force (EOF). In a formation while on the move, they all know their interlocking range fans.

All these leader tasks must be performed in a COIN environment in which we are after a "positive effect on the population." To achieve that effect requires not only leader training, but also—and, arguably, more importantly—leader education. We must educate our mobilizing leaders on the second- and third-order effects of bullying their way through crowded Baghdad streets and teach them the value of stopping and talking to citizens. We are convinced there is a correlation between the way we execute COIN and the enemy's improvised explosive device (IED) efforts. The better we train, educate, and execute what others have called "hearts and minds" COIN, the fewer and less successful the IED attacks will be.



U.S. Army/MSG Joseph McMullin

The 875th Engineer Battalion rehearsing prior to "flooding the zone" with nine assured mobility patrols during their battalion ARTEP, 7 September 2006, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin.

Troop-Leading Procedures

The five elements of combat power are maneuver, firepower, protection, leadership, and information.² These elements (and their application) determine a unit's ability to fight effectively. The more capable a unit is in each of these areas, the more combat power it brings to the fight. A unit can enhance all of these elements with proper planning, preparation, and execution. This is where TLPs come into play. Napoleon once said, "Strategy is the art of making use of time and space. I am less concerned about the latter than the former. Space we can recover, lost time never."³ Unfortunately, higher echelons or the enemy situation usually dictate—and limit—the amount of time we have to prepare and execute an operation. Junior leaders might not be able to give their subordinates more time, but they can maximize what they have by using TLPs, our company-level leaders' best weapon in the fight against time and the enemy.

For old Soldiers, the practical applications of TLPs seem self-evident. TLPs are a mind-set, a way of thinking stamped in our conscious and subconscious minds from years of experience. To our younger leaders, who are used to technological solutions and shortcuts, TLPs seem foreign, almost counterintuitive. But now more than ever it is vital that we coach and mentor our leaders in their use. Gone are the days when Soldiers received several warning orders before a full operations order. All too often our leaders are assigned "Hey, you!" missions that barely qualify as fragmentary orders. These missions have very short suspenses, and we execute them at platoon or below. Their smaller scale does not make them any less dangerous; in fact, they are usually the deadliest missions in theater. Our leaders have to prepare for them as such.

While mobilizing three assured-mobility engineer battalions at Fort McCoy, Wisconsin, we saw overwhelming evidence that the application of TLPs increased unit effectiveness. The better a unit was at TLPs, the more successful it was during combat training, especially under the time-constrained duress of the 10-day ARTEP.⁴ Companies and platoons that properly analyzed their mission; effectively organized their time; and conducted reconnaissance, rehearsals, pre-combat checks, and inspections were more prepared for the challenges of simulated combat. They overcame the complacency associated with fighting on familiar

ground and developed multiple courses of action to combat an adaptive enemy. Those units that ignored TLPs or did them poorly found themselves with limited options and routinely failed in contact with the enemy. Preparation equals success. Units that understand this and practice it are more effective.

The bottom line is that proper time management leads to better preparation and saves Soldiers' lives. When executed properly, TLPs ensure our company-level leaders and Soldiers make the best use of the time available to them and are fully prepared for their combat missions.

Intelligence Preparation of the Environment

Many company leaders mistakenly believe that because the battalion S2 conducts IPE, they do not need to. They assume that if they need information, they can just go to battalion headquarters and ask for it. This is a poor way to prepare for a mission. Battalion S2s have a great number of resources to help identify trends and probabilities of enemy contact and to target high-value and high-payoff targets; however, research done at higher echelons cannot replace the analysis leaders should do before every mission. Leaders must understand that a photograph, diagram, or chart provided by higher is useless *unless it is applied to the immediate tactical situation*.

Too often we see company leaders fail to take IPE seriously because they regard a mission as routine. These leaders fail to realize that with a thinking, evolving enemy, every mission is different from the previous one—they all require the leader to plan fully and thoughtfully. When a mission becomes routine and leaders complacent, Soldiers lose lives. This is unacceptable under any circumstances.

To help us break free from this routine-mission mentality, we need leaders skilled in the art of mission preparation. Technology greatly enhances our fighting force, but it does not replace our leaders' responsibility to think. We see company leaders who spend so much time watching blue dots move around a computer screen that they fail to develop that feel for the terrain that makes a leader successful. Terrain is just as important today as it was for Buford's cavalry on the first day at Gettysburg. We may view it on a screen instead of a paper map, and our technology might enable us to see it from multiple perspectives, but the skills required to ask



The 130th Engineer Battalion from Puerto Rico reinforces weapons discipline through NCO leadership, 15 September 2006, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin.

the right questions about it remain the same. Our leaders must learn to read and analyze terrain while using all available technological resources, and then see the terrain as it directly relates to enemy tactical possibilities. We cannot develop these skills overnight; they come from multiple repetitions of highly stressful training events. Therefore, we must take every opportunity to challenge mobilizing leaders with terrain analysis problems.

TLPs begin from the moment Soldiers receive a mission. For all leaders, this translates into IPE. A proper understanding of the four steps of IPE is crucial for all junior leaders preparing for combat missions. In Iraq and Afghanistan, where a mission is usually some kind of combat patrol or convoy and the threat comes in the form of IEDs and complex ambushes, leaders assess the environment by studying the roads on which they will travel and how those roads and surrounding terrain affect the mission.

Our leaders must relearn how to think through the enemy situation. Although we see a gradual increase in the complexity of the enemy's attacks, his tactics have remained consistent. He will continue to attack our Soldiers with IEDs because IEDs are his only successful means of attack. He will also supplement IEDs with small arms and rocket-propelled grenades to create confusion and exploit less-disciplined units. As we look at the enemy, we see trends develop in how he fights and then

anticipate the circumstances when he is likely to attack. We show skill by taking what we know of the enemy and applying it to the terrain we traverse. To do this, we need to think like the enemy. What will he do? How does the enemy want to kill or interdict us? And where? As the coalition develops successful countermeasures, is the enemy more likely to use command-detonated or suicide IEDs? Just as important, Who is the enemy? What are his goals? Most insurgent fighters do not want to die. The enemy pays them to attack coalition Soldiers, and they want to escape so they can re-engage later and make more money. What might the enemy's

escape routes be? The better we analyze the enemy, the more finite his number of options becomes. We develop an aptitude for understanding him by training the second half of IPE. A leader must create a doctrinal template of how the enemy usually fights and then apply it to his or her situation.

Sometimes we perceive war as a conflict between multiple combatants with the winner being the one who has the better weapons. On the contrary, history has shown that victory most often favors the force with the more intelligent and innovative leaders. Our junior officers and NCOs need to understand that all the technology of Blue-Force Tracker, FCB2, Falcon View, and CRYSTAL cannot replace the value of a thinking leader. IPE is a craft, a skill learned through study, developed through experience, and proven in combat. As our Soldiers and leaders become adept at seeing the terrain and understanding the enemy's capabilities and tendencies, they begin to process the IPE steps more quickly. Ultimately, with good training, IPE will allow our units to adjust rapidly to complex environments and volatile situations and develop courses of action to outmaneuver and defeat the enemy.

Ground Assault Convoys

The battlefields in Iraq and Afghanistan are not fields or open terrain, but the roads and highways that link us to our supplies. GACs occur across

Iraq and Afghanistan every day, but they are not everyday missions. GACs are combat missions, and the more training and planning we conduct prior to them, the more likely we are to kill the enemy while minimizing our casualties. Perhaps the most important thing the leader of a convoy can do is impress on his subordinates that, once they leave the confines of the base, they are no longer engineers, no longer a service support unit—they are combat Soldiers in a maneuver unit. Changing the mindset of our support units directly affects how they prepare for a mission. A unit that sees a mission as routine will treat every aspect of that mission as routine, including reacting to enemy contact. A unit that believes it is about to execute a combat operation will prepare for that mission with an increased sense of urgency and a belief that preparation will positively affect the mission's outcome. A convoy begins to take on the characteristics of a combat mission when a convoy checklist becomes a tool to accomplish pre-combat checks as opposed to a primary method of planning.

We have noticed an undeniable correlation in our GAC training between a unit's ability to adapt to changing enemy situations and its leaders' ability to grasp and apply TLPs and IPE. Commonly associated with successful combat preparation, these latter tools are essential when planning combat convoy operations because they allow our leaders to develop battle drills.

Our skill at battle drills determines the success of our convoys. GAC battle drills are established and rehearsed during TLPs based on IPE analysis. As leaders develop an increased ability to determine how the enemy is likely to fight on particular terrain, they begin to translate their analysis into tactics, techniques, and procedures for actions on contact. We cannot predict where every enemy action is going to occur, but if we know what forms of contact to expect, we can determine the actions needed

to defeat the attacks regardless of their locations. In this sense, it is critical that our convoy commanders and leaders think tactically.

There are seven traditional forms of contact: visual, direct fire, indirect fire, obstacles, air, electronic, and NBC. In the contemporary operating environment, we can never totally dismiss the last three, but the likelihood of their occurrence is remote. Therefore, we should concentrate our efforts on the first four. Insurgent attacks generally take the form of direct fire, indirect fire, or obstacles such as IEDs. We must focus our tactical efforts here. The insurgents' inherent camouflage—their hiding within the population—makes them likely to win the battle of visual contact, allowing them to initiate contact. Our leaders must prepare their Soldiers to respond reflexively with audacity and precision to quickly gain the initiative. For example, we must develop drills to react to IED contact, or (preferably) to gain visual contact with the IED before it detonates. The bottom line with any form of contact is that we must develop sound courses of action in the form of battle drills and rehearse them until they are second nature.

The key to executing successful battle drills in combat is rehearsals. Without them, leaders and



U.S. Army / SFC James Bowman

The 321st Engineer Battalion rehearses IED interrogation with the surrogate Buffalo prior to executing a platoon assured mobility patrol during its ARTEP, 29 August 2006, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin.

Soldiers must learn under direct fire, where they are likely to fail. Through rehearsals, leaders develop courses of action for enemy contact before the contact occurs, so that when they come under fire, the only command to give is “Execute.”

Rehearsals should not be confined to the unit level; they apply down to the individual Soldier in a vehicle. In training our mobilizing units, we emphasize three distinct kinds of rehearsals that must be conducted prior to each mission: crew, patrol, and mission-specific. Each member of our crew must know exactly what tasks to perform in any given situation and be proficient at every other position within the vehicle. They must know their jobs in and out of contact, during short halts, and on the move. When the vehicle commander is fully confident in his crew, they are ready to progress to patrol-level rehearsals. Here our leaders develop actions on contact and battle drills for every form of contact and scenario we might face. In the last phase, we rehearse our battle drills for the specific impending mission.

We must be disciplined as individuals and as a unit to continue the practice of these three phases of rehearsals, but if we execute effectively and intelligently, our units will react to contact without hesitation. They will gain fire dominance, seize the initiative, and defeat the enemy.

Fire Distribution and Control

Our Army has put a considerable amount of effort into ensuring that its Soldiers are aware of and know how to properly implement prescribed rules of engagement (ROE) and EOF procedures. Higher headquarters provides ROE to clearly define the criteria we must meet before engaging a threat, and when an engagement does occur, EOF procedures ensure we take adequate steps to avoid collateral damage. However, while these procedures can reduce unnecessary casualties, they do not teach a Soldier weapons discipline. We want our Soldiers to respond with lethal force based on instincts learned from extensive training and an understanding of their tactical situation. This rote muscle memorization and split-second decision-making is a foundation in today’s best combat units. It is a skill that must be drilled into all our Soldiers and preached by our company leaders.

A precursor to developing a unit full of disciplined Soldiers is success in the critical leader task

of properly planning and controlling fires. Good FDC ensures that priority targets are engaged first and with the correct weapon system. Simply put, our tactical units are more effective when they plan for when, where, and how to shoot. When we develop and implement a fire plan, everyone in our convoy or patrol knows his or her sector of responsibility. We increase our units’ lethality by covering a broader area and by focusing our automatic weapons systems where they are most effective and needed. Disciplined units control their fires and are more effective in killing the enemy and avoiding unnecessary loss of civilian life.

We have noticed that the most definitive indication of an undisciplined unit is the regular mishandling of weapons. Soldiers who habitually leave a weapon on fire, keep their fingers in the trigger well, or do not maintain muzzle awareness tend to be unreliable in battle. A unit’s lack of weapons discipline is a leadership failure. Our leaders are responsible for teaching and reinforcing the principles of weapons control status and posture. When we teach and coach these basic Soldier skills properly, we build a foundation for weapons efficiency. They must be integrated into all of our training. The live-fire exercise at the National Training Center shouldn’t be the first time our Soldiers are forced to practice FDC; we must make them do it during force-on-force exercises too. We must train as we fight, and that means executing all training as if we are firing real bullets with real consequences.

Weapons discipline in the form of observed fire control measures won’t just yield benefits in direct-fire contact; it will also reduce the number of negligent discharges we see in training and especially in combat. In Iraq last year, our Army lost two Soldiers and suffered 26 injuries from negligent discharges.⁵ Such blows are devastating to the morale and cohesiveness of a unit, and they are totally avoidable.

Fire control is also a catalyst for successful COIN. If our Soldiers can learn to maintain awareness of their weapons and discriminate between civilian and enemy targets, they will limit the number of fence sitters we push the insurgents’ way. Understanding and applying proper weapons posture (e.g., knowing to place crew-served weapons on “hold” as opposed to “tight” in a crowded marketplace) is a leader responsibility that can prevent unnecessary

deaths. Prescribing a weapons posture tells our Soldiers the “who” and “when” of deadly-force escalation. Equally important is the selection of which weapon to shoot. Before contact ever occurs, leaders should designate the caliber of weapon to be employed in a given situation. The force protection provided by a .50 caliber machine gun does not outweigh the collateral damage and hatred created by killing a child with a stray round. In an already difficult fight, the more people we can keep from supporting the insurgent cause, the more we will succeed. Our leaders need to understand this.

Counterinsurgency

One of the American Army’s staples of success has always been that it empowers its junior leaders to make decisions as the situation dictates. We give our leaders a commander’s intent, and they execute their mission based on that intent. Because of their excellent training and competence, our leaders more often than not make the correct decision with the information they have. This being the case, it is crucial for our junior leaders to fully understand the dynamics of COIN. In today’s operational environment, countering an insurgency is the commander’s intent. The more our leaders understand this, the more successful they will be.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are highly scrutinized. If the tactical battlefield is those countries’ highways and roads, the strategic battlefield is the

television screen, the Internet, and the covers of newspapers and magazines around the world.

We fight these wars at company level and below, and the only way to win them is to educate junior leaders and Soldiers about the kind of war they are fighting. Today, every Soldier is in a sense an ambassador—at times, a lethal ambassador, but an ambassador nonetheless. Our staff sergeants and lieutenants make tactical decisions daily that can turn up on worldwide TV at night, with strategic consequences. They must understand these consequences if they are to make correct decisions. In our current COIN missions, our leaders must remember that killing the enemy is not our main objective; rather, we are fighting to win the support of a civilian population and to establish the legitimacy of a fledgling government. This is the one type of fight where you must use firepower with discretion. If you don’t, you could win a battle but contribute to losing a war.

Firepower is an element of combat power, but in today’s combat environment, firepower is linked to another element of combat power: protection. On contact, our Soldiers can quickly gain fire dominance to protect themselves, but sometimes, particularly when our response is disproportionate or less than discriminate, our firepower disrupts society, breeds hatred, and fuels the insurgency.⁶ The insurgents’ goals are to see the government fail and to turn the public against us. Our junior leaders need to understand that improper actions



U.S. Army/SFC James Bowman

The 130th Engineer Battalion learns to interact with civilians on the battlefield while simultaneously maintaining security, 14 September 2006, Fort McCoy, Wisconsin.

aid the insurgent cause and that fighting an insurgency requires courage, patience, and, above all else, discipline.

Focusing on the “Big Five”

The “Big Five” have their place in Army doctrine, but the training of these critical tasks *as a set* is our formula for leader development. We are not implying that our leaders’ predeployment training should be limited to these five areas; we are merely suggesting a method to focus that training. Because mobilizing Soldiers do not routinely practice these crucial leader skills, we coach, teach, and mentor them until they are competent in each area. We have finite time and finite resources; therefore, it is incumbent on us to focus our training efforts. We concentrate on junior leaders, and on those areas we know we can train efficiently and effectively.

The big picture, as we see it, is that we are fighting a war unlike the kind our Army had grown comfortable with. We designed the “Big Five” to build upon one another. They are nested in their purpose of preparing our junior leaders for the increasingly complex combat environment of a counterinsurgency. Our young leaders must relearn the art of thinking through

a conflict. We do not win a counterinsurgency with military muscle alone; we win by expending mental as well as kinetic energy.

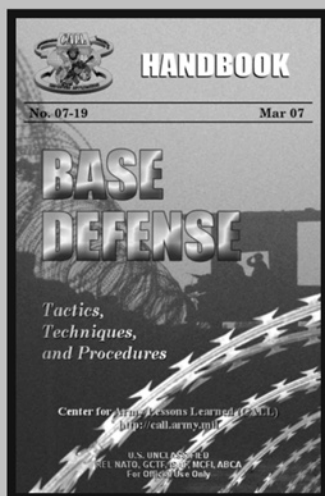
Our mobilizing Soldiers may be the decisive factor in the War on Terrorism. They need and deserve the very best leaders, and we are determined to ensure that they get them. That’s why we focus our leader training primarily on pre-combat preparation—TLPs, IPE, GACs, FDC, COIN. We want—we *need*—to build competent, confident units whose leaders have prepared them to execute under fire and defeat the enemy. **MR**

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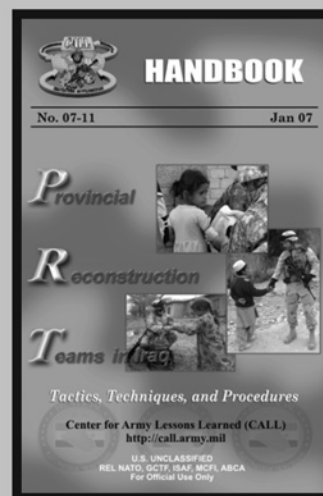
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The Art and Aggravation of Vetting in Post-Conflict Environments

Sean McFate

Sean McFate is an expert in security sector reform, conflict analysis and prevention, and the security-development nexus. He was formerly the principal advisor of peacekeeping and humanitarian affairs at DynCorp International, an NYSE-listed company that provides services to the U.S. Government. In that capacity, he advised the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Defense, and various foreign governments on topics ranging from national security strategy to disarmament demobilization and reintegration. He has also served as a U.S. Army officer with the 82d Airborne Division and other units. Following military service, he founded a consulting firm in Washington, D.C., that advised transnational corporations on political risk. Mr. McFate holds a master of public policy from the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and dual bachelor degrees from Brown University in history and religious studies.

PHOTO: Over 300 applicants turned up for an Iraqi Police recruiting event held 11 January 2005 at the Baghdad Convention Center. (U.S. Army/SPC Erik LeDrew)

ON 22 FEBRUARY 2006, insurgents posing as Iraqi police officers destroyed the Golden Mosque in Samarra, one of Iraq's holiest Shi'ite shrines. The attack set off a spasm of sectarian violence that has metastasized into what some consider an intractable civil war. Since then, the insurgent tactic of infiltrating the security forces and corrupting its personnel has become almost commonplace, with catastrophic results for Iraq. The populace distrusts Iraqi security forces, coalition forces distrust their Iraqi counterparts, the Iraqi Government is viewed as increasingly illegitimate, and the country has plunged into further chaos, delaying the safe transfer of security responsibilities to Iraqi forces.

The undermining of the Iraqi police forces occurred, in part, because of negligible *vetting*—the investigation and selection of new recruits for the police force. Creating a professional indigenous security force is a mandatory component of any exit strategy in a costly post-conflict reconstruction mission. Yet creating such a force depends utterly on the competent vetting of candidates for that force. Failure to vet recruits to ensure they possess the “proper character” can result in the infiltration of criminals, insurgents, warlords, and other undesirables into the state's security apparatus, setting up the possibility of a coup d'état or worse.¹ This, in turn, may trigger a cycle of costly international interventions and endless peacekeeping operations. Thus, competent vetting of indigenous security forces is the linchpin of post-conflict reconstruction.

Unfortunately, no model for vetting exists, and recent efforts to establish a vetting process in Iraq and elsewhere have been ad hoc and disappointing. Nor has the situation been helped by the paucity of literature, either academic or practical, on vetting indigenous security forces: there is scant scholarship on the issue and no large-scale comparative study of vetting. That no international treaty addresses the subject reflects the relative novelty of the issue and the general lack of interest in formulating a common approach. Also, no U.S. Government, United Nations, or nongovernmental organization has written a manual on vetting, a remarkable fact given that security forces are currently being reconstituted in Iraq, Afghanistan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and elsewhere.

Lessons Learned After WWII

Since the end of World War II, the international community has learned many lessons about security force vetting and *lustration* (culling an existing security force for the best individuals while dismissing the others).

The first lesson is that *the effects of vetting or lustration may be short-lived if the process is hurried or abandoned halfway through* (i.e., recruit first, vet later). The largest post-WWII lustration effort occurred immediately following the war, as the Allies judged Axis leaders. In Europe, this was known as denazification, and it is estimated that 13 million Germans underwent it, 600,000 of whom were sanctioned. Separately, France purged collaborators of the Vichy regime and Italy dismissed approximately 2,000 government employees. Despite denazification, many former Nazis eventually made their way back into public service. Similarly, Italy reinstated all lustrated personnel in 1948.

A second lesson is that *failure to respect the rights of individuals under review will delegitimize the process and open it up to external challenges*. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, former Communist countries passed lustration laws to drastically reduce the size of their governments, including the security sectors. In Hungary, 12,000 high-level officials were subject to lustration, although only a fraction were sanctioned for their participation in the previous regime. In Czechoslovakia, out of approximately 300,000 cases considered, 15,000 individuals were removed from office. Poland also lustrated citizens alleged to have collaborated with the secret police. All the post-Communism lustration laws of the 1990s were widely criticized for insufficiently taking into account the rights of those subjected to lustration.²

A third lesson is that *a lack of political will, inadequate resources, or a poorly thought-out plan will result in failure*—the task is that complex. The International Police Task Force in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was initially tasked with screening all candidates for the Federation's police forces and identifying anyone previously engaged in ethnic cleansing or other crimes against ethnic minorities. Its vetting was so ineffectual that the task was eventually transferred to the Human Rights Office in Bosnia.³

Lesson four is that *process matters*. A 2005 Government Accountability Office (GAO) report,

Southeast Asia: Better Human Rights Reviews and Strategic Planning Needed for U.S. Assistance to Foreign Security Forces, examined U.S. security sector reform efforts to equip and train military and police forces in the Philippines, Thailand, and Indonesia from 2001 to 2004. It found “no evidence that U.S. officials vetted an estimated 6,900 foreign security trainees” as required by U.S. law.⁴ Worse, 32 Indonesians from a notorious special-forces police unit received training, even though the unit was prohibited by the U.S. Department of State (DOS) from receiving U.S. training funds because of human rights abuses. This undesirable outcome resulted from the lack of “clear policies and procedures for vetting foreign security forces.”⁵ The GAO found little evidence of “ground-truthing,” investigating, public records checking, consultation with victims’ groups, or accounting for aliases or noms de guerre. No consolidated written policy existed to establish interagency vetting standards and procedures, sources and methods, roles and responsibilities, databases, or oversight mechanisms. Conducting Internet searches and scanning newspaper clippings—the usual expedients—is simply insufficient for complex, prolonged conflicts.

The fifth and last lesson learned is that *the failure to vet recruits might help an insurgent organization penetrate state security forces*. The joint Department of Defense (DOD) and DOS inspector general (IG) report on vetting for the new Iraqi Police Service (IPS) states that “recruitment and vetting procedures [were] faulty,” resulting in incompetents, criminals, and insurgents joining the IPS, a problem not easily undone.⁶ The report also reveals that “the IG Team was told that, especially early in 2003, only a cursory background check, if even that, was conducted before policemen were trained or entered the force.”⁷ The vetting process was stymied by a lack of public records and witnesses and by cross-cultural and language difficulties. Overall, according to the report, “the Coalition’s ability to conduct thorough background checks on IPS personnel [was] severely limited.”⁸ The report notes that inducting criminals into the IPS was a continual concern. Even more troubling was infiltration by terrorists or insurgents. Sufficient evidence was found to conclude that “such persons indeed are among the ranks of the IPS,” which underscores “the need for the most rigorous possible review of each applicant’s records.”⁹

Why Vetting is Difficult

One reason why no coherent vetting policy exists is because failed and weak states are, by their nature, disordered and chaotic. Typical sources and methods used in background checks (criminal records, credit history, education records, employment history, and so on) do not exist, are not credible, or are insufficient. Even establishing identity can prove daunting, as attempts to hold legitimate elections in post-conflict states have demonstrated.

Another reason why no policy exists is the high prevalence of criminal behavior during conflicts, especially during prolonged civil wars. In such environments the number of problematic candidates will be correspondingly high. Those conducting the vetting process might find themselves rejecting most of the candidates. Lustration also might not work as a security sector reform technique because, given the high rate of crimes, remaining veterans might corrupt new recruits, thus compromising the new security force. Instead, it might be better to completely demobilize the security sector and reconstitute it.

However, reconstructing a state's security sector is dangerous. Instability and violence are never far beneath the surface in post-conflict environments, and the vetting process can easily cause dangerous ripples. In weak or failed states, a security force is often the strongest institution, and, in many cases, is or was a major contributing factor to the state's demise. Attempts at reform can result in violent reprisals against staff and supporters of reform, while investigations into war crimes might dredge up painful memories for a fragile population and possibly rekindle violence over unaddressed wrongs. The vetting process must remain absolutely unconnected to instruments of post-conflict justice such as so-called truth and reconciliation commissions. Often, security and justice are at odds in post-conflict settings.

Vetting is a highly sensitive process that invites a relapse of violence and state failure. If the vetting process fails to safeguard the identities of victims who help identify perpetrators, then those victims might be intimidated, coerced, or killed in reprisal. If the vetting process accidentally overlooks a war criminal, then all vetted individuals could be discredited and a violent backlash might occur. Additionally, wrongful denunciations of innocent individuals could generate antagonism in the com-



Courtesy of author

Current and former child soldiers present vetting challenges in post-conflict environments, Liberia, 2005.

munity. The vetting procedure must understand these risks and remain sensitive to how the process might affect a frail society. Failure to do so could result in tensions within the new security force, a lack of public confidence in the force, and the emplacement of a force more likely to reproduce patterns of abuse.

A post-conflict environment is one of the most difficult operating environments in the world. It is almost uniformly characterized by extreme poverty and lack of infrastructure, law, and security. Simply moving cross-country can become a daunting expedition requiring robust security convoys, careful route reconnaissance, resupply points, spare vehicles, air medical evacuation support, river-crossing



Courtesy of author

A self-contained recruiting and vetting convoy of 14 vehicles moves into Liberia's interior for a 21-day mission, 2006.

capabilities, a disciplined staff, and significant contingency planning. Other factors that could affect operations include institutionalized corruption, exotic diseases, prevalence of traffic accidents, a lack of logistical resupply, wild animals, and high rates of crime. One cannot assume the availability of amenities such as potable water, electricity, and shelter. A vetting staff must be prepared for a possible lack of cooperation from authorities, the novelty of the procedure for the population, the absence of precedents, and cultural misunderstandings that could prove disastrous. Consequently, the vetting program must be designed around these limitations, all of which influence morale, operations, budgeting, scheduling, and the quality of vetting.

A Vetting Model

The purpose of vetting personnel for an indigenous security force is to select individuals who will respect the rule of law and human rights norms. Vetting is often part of a larger security sector reform program to create a new force subservient to the state, not vice versa. To achieve this, the vetting staff's primary goal should be to ensure that no person of improper character is accepted into the new force. This is the *raison d'être* of vetting, and it overrides all other priorities, such as an applicant's relevant experience or technical skills.

Before designing a vetting plan, practitioners must develop an end-state vision for the new force through consultations with stakeholders. Typically, the security force will be an all-volunteer force with a balanced mix of ethnicity, religion, gender, and other political categories. The goal of the recruiting, vetting, and training components of security sector reform is to achieve a force that maintains a professional ethos, respects the rule of law, cultivates public service leadership, is apolitical, and accepts civilian control with transparent oversight mechanisms. The force must be postured so that it is strong enough to defend the integrity of the nation's borders but not so strong that it threatens neighbors with its force-projection capability. Its structure, equipment, and training must be appropriate to the force's mission (for example, Liberia does not require F-16 fighter jets). Perhaps most critically, the new security force must not be so large that the government cannot pay its salaries. Such a condition is a precipitant to civil war.

In line with the end-state vision, the vetting process is not about establishing guilt or innocence, but about determining suitability for acceptance into the new security force. A vetting model must be founded on two fundamental but divergent considerations: normative issues and pragmatic concerns. The normative component concerns what to vet. In other words, what behavior, criminal or otherwise, justifies rejecting a candidate from the indigenous force? The pragmatic component examines how to vet. That is, what are the actual vetting procedures, how is a candidate's application examined, and what principles are applicable to that examination?

The grounds for disqualification are fundamentally different for each component. The normative component rejects a candidate based on credible evidence of wrongful conduct unrelated to the vetting process, such as prior crimes. For the pragmatic component, a candidate is rejected based on credible evidence of wrongful conduct related to the vetting process, such as cheating, lying, or refusing to cooperate during the vetting procedure.

Normative Component: What to Vet

What behaviors or crimes justify rejection from service in post-conflict state security forces? How do we derive these rejection standards? How do we legitimize these standards to the myriad domestic and international stakeholders?

Because each post-conflict environment is unique, we cannot decree a universal set of vetting principles. However, it is possible to develop a set of core crimes to serve as the foundation for vetting. Core crimes are wrongful acts such as genocide that justify exclusion from state security forces in most situations. Individual security sector reform programs can build on this set of core crimes to develop a tailored set of behavioral standards appropriate for each post-conflict situation. Several sources of international law exist that can inform the compilation of a set of core crimes, including international criminal law (ICL), international humanitarian law (IHL), and international human rights law (IHRL).

International criminal law. ICL is an imperfect instrument for vetting because it often requires proof of intent, which is difficult to demonstrate. As defined in the 1948 Geneva Convention on

the Prevention and Repression of Genocide, the international crime of genocide requires proof that the crime has been pursued “with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group.”¹⁰ Such intent would be difficult to prove. The act of murder, however, is easier to prove and equally effective as a rejection criterion. In fact, any of the underlying acts enunciated by the 2002 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court definition of crimes against humanity are sufficient for rejection from most security forces.¹¹

International humanitarian law. IHL, also known as the law of war, provides a useful framework for vetting. Although IHL is designed to exculpate individuals from acts during war (such as killing) that would be considered crimes in civil society, this distinction is often complicated by the intrastate nature of most of today’s conflicts. However, any grave breach of the Geneva Conventions or violation of the customs of war would warrant rejection from most security forces, especially if the country were party to the Conventions. Of particular relevance within the Conventions is the treatment of noncombatants.¹²

International human rights law. IHRL can buttress IHL, but it is too nebulous to use in developing a set of core crimes. For example, are international human rights directives or aspirations? Which human rights violations clearly justify rejection of an applicant? Some rights are too vague for a candidate’s disqualification, such as violating the right “to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms . . . can be fully realized.”¹³ Because most current post-conflict settings are recovering from intrastate wars characterized by widespread human rights abuses over many years (Sudan, Liberia, Iraq, Somalia, Haiti, El Salvador, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and so on), it is unrealistic to judge post-conflict populations by the same standards of reasonably functioning rule-of-law states during the same period. What would be considered a serious violation of human rights in the developed world might be overshadowed by more egregious violations committed by others during an armed conflict.

Given the ambiguities of human rights and the nature of intrastate warfare, determining what constitutes core crimes comes down to distinctions between violations that result in immediate disqualification and those that do not. Many international human rights

instruments make such a distinction by differentiating between derogable and nonderogable rights. Derogable rights are rights that may be suspended by states under limited circumstances, as specified in article 4 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Nonderogable rights cannot be restricted even in cases of public emergency. They include—

- The right to life (article 6).
- The right not to endure torture and cruel or inhuman punishment (article 7).
- The right not to endure slavery and involuntary servitude [article 8(1) and (2)].
- The right not to endure imprisonment for breach of contract (article 11).
- The right not to endure retrospective criminal legislation (article 15).
- The right to be recognized before the law (article 16).
- The right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion (article 18).¹⁴

By analyzing international law, it is possible to derive a set of core crimes to use as a basis for most security sector reform vetting programs. These crimes constitute per se disqualifications for service in the security sector (see Table 1). In order of gravity, core crimes are unlawful killing, unlawful wounding, torturing, outrages on personal dignity, rape, and abduction or arbitrary detention.

For a vetting program to operate successfully in a post-conflict environment, the program must be perceived as legitimate. It is critical for stakeholders to find common ground on fundamental questions regarding the definitions of core crimes, the proper character for police or military candidates, and the standard of evidence necessary to reject a candidate. Although core crimes are based on international law, a country’s own domestic law should be built into the edifice. Domestic penal law will generally include a number of offenses that find equivalency in core crimes, such as criminal homicide; assaults, endangering behavior, and threats; sexual offenses; and kidnapping and related offences. Combining international core crimes and domestic law will help secure legitimacy and local cooperation.

Pragmatic Component: How to Vet

Vetting candidates in post-conflict environments is extremely challenging. How should candidates

CORE CRIME	INTERNATIONAL LAW			
	Genocide (ICL)	Crimes Against Humanity (IHL)	War Crimes (IHL)	Grave Human Rights Abuses (IHRL)
<i>Unlawful Killing</i>	Killing	Murder	Willfully killing or wounding a combatant who, having laid down his arms or having no longer means of defense, has surrendered at discretion; killing treacherously a combatant adversary	Violation of the right to life
<i>Unlawful Wounding</i>	Causing serious bodily or mental harm	Inhuman acts... intentionally causing serious injury to body or to mental or physical health	Willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health; subjecting persons who are in the power of an adverse party to physical mutilation; wounding treacherously a combatant adversary	Violation of the right to be free from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment
<i>Torture</i>		Torture	Torture	Violation of the right to be free from torture
<i>Outrages Upon Personal Dignity</i>		Inhuman acts... intentionally causing great suffering	Inhuman treatment, committing outrages upon personal dignity, in particular humiliating and degrading treatment	Violation of the right to be free from cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment
<i>Rape</i>		Rape	Committing rape; sexual slavery; enforced prostitution; forced pregnancy as it is defined in article 7, paragraph 2 (f); enforced sterilization; or any other form of sexual violence	Violation of the right to be free from torture and from cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
<i>Abduction, Arbitrary, Detention, and/or Hostage-Taking</i>		Deportation, imprisonment, or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law	Unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement, taking of hostages	Violation of the right to personal liberty

Table 1. Core crimes and international law.

be selected in a country where many individuals are victims, perpetrators, or both of human rights abuses? How can the vetting staff conduct background checks in a country that has no credible public records, a dubious justice system, weak institutions, institutionalized corruption, and a distrustful public?

Currently, there is no widely accepted methodology for recruiting indigenous security forces in a post-conflict setting. Typically, vetting is embedded within the recruiting program of a larger security sector reform effort. Most recruitment efforts include—

- Conducting a nationwide public information campaign.
- Taking applications from candidates at a recruitment center.

- Giving candidates a physical-fitness test, a functional literacy and/or aptitude test, and a medical exam.

- Conducting the vetting process.
- Making a final review and judgment of a candidate's suitability for service.
- Informing rejected candidates of their limited right to review why they were rejected.
- Informing accepted candidates that they must serve the first year on a probationary status (allowing additional time for vetting, if necessary).

Recruitment begins with a national public information campaign, which serves two functions: to sensitize the populace to the reconstitution of the security force and to attract volunteers. The sensitization process helps in explaining why a new security force is needed and what its mission and

principles will be (such as respecting the rule of law, human rights, and so on). Volunteers can be attracted by describing service benefits and eligibility standards and by informing interested persons how and where to apply. Planning and implementing such a campaign might be an onerous task given a lack of infrastructure, low literacy rate, diverse ethnic languages, conflict history, and general mistrust, especially the mistrust of security forces that is prevalent in post-conflict societies.

If the public information campaign is ably conducted, recruitment centers can expect many applicants. The prospect of a stable, honorable income in a poor country with high unemployment will appeal to many, and this should generate a sizable candidate pool for the security sector reform program. However, the legacy of violence will also mean that many candidates of dubious character will seek to join the new military or police force, owing to the historic relationship between power and force. As a result, the vetting process should not count on self-selection; rather, it must rely wholly on the rigors of the vetting procedure to uncover unqualified individuals.

Once candidates arrive at a recruitment center, they are systematically evaluated as efficiently as possible. Failure to pass the physical test, functional literacy test, or medical exam should result in an immediate exclusion from service without appeal.¹⁵ The vetting staff should administer tests in the order of least resource-intensive to most resource-intensive, because it is cheaper and faster to evaluate candidates' physical fitness than their literacy. By combining immediate exclusions and prioritization of resource-efficient tests, recruiters can rapidly weed out unqualified candidates. This is critical because vetting is the most resource-intensive portion of the recruitment process, and the candidate pool must be culled as much as possible early on to allow a more manageable caseload for the vetting team and to ensure higher quality vetting.

Vetting in post-conflict environments involves background checks, records checks, and publication vetting. Actual vetting begins when the investigating team (one international and one local investigator) interviews the applicant. The team should ask each candidate a standard set of comprehensive questions in order to obtain and confirm basic information regarding the identity and background



Courtesy of author

Recruits for security forces take a physical training test in Liberia, 2006. This test is administered first to reduce the number of recruits before the resource-intensive vetting process takes place.

information the candidate provided on the application. Following the interview, the team should conduct a background investigation to establish the overall truthfulness of the applicant's claims and to uncover any credible evidence of wrongdoing. The background check should cover such essentials as age, citizenship, schooling, work history, claimed special skills, and any documents the applicant submitted. The investigating team should also



Courtesy of author

Each vetting team should consist of one international and one national member—equals who offer complementary skills, Liberia, 2006.

interview people who know the candidate well: people who provided the candidate's references as well as neighbors, employers, co-workers, relatives, municipal authorities, teachers, community leaders, and local religious leaders. In many cases, it will be helpful to have an applicant draw a map to his or her home and community, since street names and numbers can be rare in post-conflict settings.

Simultaneously, the vetting team runs a public-records check on the applicant. Although weak states often have few credible records, a public-records audit can prove useful to determine document fraud, criminal activity, and allegations of human rights abuses. Sources of information include old government records, domestic and international nongovernmental organizations, the United Nations, and other government sources such as U.S. watch lists. The records audit should produce a weighted index of record veracity, breadth, depth, and applicability.

Publication vetting is a direct appeal to the population to solicit local knowledge of a candidate's past wrongdoing. Safe, anonymous channels must be established so that victims can give information without suffering reprisal. In this form of vetting, the candidate's picture, name(s), physical description, place of birth, and unique recruiting identity number are publicized nationally to afford witnesses and victims an opportunity to identify undesirable candidates. Mediums for publication vetting include radio and television stations, especially those with nationwide coverage; national and regional newspaper inserts; and posters and face-books positioned at transportation hubs, commercial districts, victim centers, refugee and internally displaced people camps, and major community centers such as churches, schools, and sports stadiums. The team might also ask select members of the public who possess special knowledge of past crimes, such as solicitors, academic researchers, civil society groups, and journalists, to submit relevant information concerning the human rights records of candidates. Because publication vetting invites false accusations, the vetting staff must allocate extra time for investigating complaints. While publication vetting is resource-intensive, the cost of not engaging the public in vetting is greater, given the limitations of background checks and public records in failed states and post-conflict environments.

After gathering relevant information and records, the vetting staff must make a final judgment about the candidate. The staff should designate a joint review board or similar entity to act as the selection approving authority. The board should include major stakeholders in order to foster local ownership, imbue the process with legitimacy, and help insulate the vetting staff from culpability should a candidate be or become an insurgent.

As aforementioned, candidates can be disqualified on either normative or pragmatic grounds. The latter refers to credible evidence of wrongdoing during the recruitment and vetting process (lying, cheating, noncooperation, or other behaviors not desirable in a security force). Normative grounds—credible evidence of wrongdoing unrelated to the vetting process—include but are not limited to—

- Credible allegations of commission of one or more core crimes.
- Discovery of a criminal background or association with or direct involvement with persons engaged in criminal activity.
- Association with any party or persons wanting to do harm to or interfere with reconstruction programs.
- Involvement in financial crimes, acts of corruption, or the accumulation of significant illegal wealth, property, or possessions as a result of intimidation, corruption, the taking of bribes, smuggling in violation of international sanctions, or other illegal acts.
- Mental instability that could be a threat to the safety and security of soldiers and civilians.
- Use of illegal narcotics or other illegal drugs.

If there are allegations against the recruit, the staff must assess the gravity of any crime and the credibility of the evidence. As is the case with determining what constitutes a human rights abuse, it is inappropriate and unpractical to apply the same legal standards for developed states to failed states when attempting to determine the credibility of an allegation. The "balance of probabilities" standard, widely accepted by the European Court of Human Rights in adjudicating human rights cases, offers the best hope for a post-conflict vetting environment. In essence, the balance-of-probabilities standard is an injunction to evaluate whether an alleged offense is more probable than not. Guidelines for assessing the credibility of evidence are:

- The general trustworthiness of allegations made against an applicant (level of detail; coherence and



Recruits in basic training with a drill instructor, Liberia, 2006.

absence of contradiction; identification of dates, locations, and circumstances).

- The general trustworthiness of the authors of the allegations (personal circumstances, general interest or involvement, link with the applicant, link with parties to the conflict, link to other applicants).

- Whether or not there are concurring allegations, especially when the circumstances of the crime's commission indicate that multiple persons witnessed the crime or its circumstances. However, the fact that an allegation comes from only one source should not be a bar to its being considered credible, particularly if the circumstances of the alleged criminal behavior make it likely that there could be only one witness.

The final review process is critical because it corrects deficiencies in vetting, maximizes probity within the process, and instills a sense of procedural justice for disqualified applicants, thereby reducing acts of vengeance against the security sector reform staff and society in general.

A Tightrope Act

Vetting is a high-profile tightrope act in which the need for individuals of proper character must be balanced against the need for skilled individuals with scarce expertise, while the rights of victims must be weighed against the interests of applicants. Also to be considered is the ethnic mix of the new security force. Because internal conflicts and civil wars are often fought between groups of different ethnicities, religious beliefs, tribes, and other non-state identifiers, the ethnic mix of a new security force can be a particularly sensitive issue. Generally, post-conflict reconstruction seeks diversity in government and power-sharing among divided

populations. A single group should not disproportionately dominate the new security sector lest it seize control of the government.

But what happens when the principle of diversity collides with other principles necessary for a competent indigenous security force? Should a vetting program lower the standards for human rights vetting for a group with a high rate of human rights violations in order to achieve diversity in the new armed forces? Should a vetting program waive the literacy requirements for groups that were unfairly denied access to education? Having multiple standards of entry among an already polarized and unstable society can have deleterious consequences for the security forces. However, for one group or only a few people to dominate the security force could prove disastrous. Achieving balance within nascent security forces is often a Hobson's choice. It is what makes vetting as much an art as a science. **MR**

NOTES

1. For lack of a better term, I use "proper character" to loosely convey the qualities and ethics desirable in individuals charged with providing state security and applying force. The specificities and standards of these characteristics must be negotiated among stakeholders before vetting begins.

2. See Wojciech Sadurski, "Decommunisation, 'Lustration,' and Constitutional Continuity: Dilemmas of Transitional Justice in Central Europe," *EUI Law Working Papers*, no. 2003/15 (2003); Roman Boed, "An Evaluation of the Legality and Efficacy of Lustration as a Tool of Transitional Justice," in *Post Conflict Justice*, ed. Cherif Bassiouni, (2002); Marc S. Ellis, "Purging the Past: The Current State of Lustration Laws in the Former Communist Bloc," *Law and Contemporary Problems* 59, no. 4 (1996): 181-196; Mark Gibney, "Decommunization: Human Rights Lessons from the Past and Present, and Prospects for the Future," *Denver Journal of International Law and Policy* 87 (1994).

3. Human Rights Watch, "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Beyond Restraint; Politics and the Policing Agenda of the United Nations International Police Task Force," vol. 10, no. 5(D), June 1998, <www.hrw.org/reports98/bosnia>.

4. U.S. law restricts the provision of funds to units of foreign security forces when the U.S. Department of State (DOS) has credible evidence that the unit has committed gross violations of human rights. Commonly referred to as the Leahy Law, this restriction first appeared in the 1997 Foreign Operations Export Financing and Related Appropriations Act (P.L. 104-208) and only applied to funds appropriated to DOS's international narcotics control program. In 1998, Congress broadened the law to apply to all funds appropriated under the 1998 Foreign Operations Export Financing and Related Appropriations Act (P.L. 105-118). In 1999, a similar provision appeared in the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Appropriations Act (P.L. 105-262), which applied to funds appropriated under that act. The two provisions have appeared each year since in the annual Foreign Operations Appropriations Act and the DOD Appropriations Act, respectively.

5. U.S. Government Accountability Office Report-05-793, *Southeast Asia: Better Human Rights Reviews and Strategic Planning Needed for U.S. Assistance to Foreign Security Forces* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 29 July 2005), <www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?gao-05-793>.

6. Office of the Inspector General Report, "Interagency Assessment of Iraq Police Training," 15 July 2005, 22.

7. *Ibid.*, 23.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*, 25.

10. United Nations (UN), Geneva Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Geneva, 9 December 1948.

11. Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, 2187 UNT.S. 3, entered into force 1 July 2002, <www.un.org/law/icc/statute/contents.htm>. The United States is not a signatory to the Rome Statute.

12. UN, Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 75 UNT.S. 287, entered into force 21 October 1950.

13. UN, A Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 38, Geneva, 1948.

14. UN, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 4, <www.hrw.org/legal/cpr.html>.

15. There are exceptions to the vetting process I describe here, but a fuller explanation and analysis of post-conflict recruitment is beyond the scope of this study.



~The MARAS~ A Menace to the Americas

Federico Brevé, former Minister of Defense of Honduras

IN RECENT YEARS, thanks mainly to the fiscal discipline applied to public spending by Central America's governments, and to the effect of trade tools such as the Dominican Republic-Central American Free Trade Agreement, the countries of the Central American isthmus have enjoyed constant economic growth. Still, at least in part because of a corresponding growth in demographics, the benefits of economic growth and welfare have not filtered down to the poorest sectors of the population. As a consequence, Central America faces a crime problem that, if allowed to persist, will hamper further investment and growth in the region.

Persistent poverty might be the major cause of Central America's crime problem, but it isn't the only one. Underemployment, a deficient education system, little social emphasis on staying in school, declining moral values brought on by scarce family and religious orientation, an increase in deportations of illegal immigrants from the United States, and in some measure, the abolition of obligatory military service have all contributed to the crime surge. Nor can we ignore public criticism of the region's justice systems, whose police, prosecutors, and judges seem unable or unwilling to control daily criminal acts that run the gamut from simple theft of cell phones to street assaults, vendetta killings, and trafficking in narcotics, arms, and human beings.¹

Altogether, it's not hard to see why Central America has a crime problem, one that provides the news media with a constant source of material. What particularly needs to be understood, however, is the role played by organized criminal elements, and in particular by the youth gangs known as maras.

The Role of the Maras

Although they have followed a peculiar developmental path, the maras are in many ways a symptom as well as a cause of a climate of insecurity that is overwhelming Central America. Comprised of violent, often vicious young people, these gangs are terrorizing whole sectors of society. It is important that we examine them more thoroughly.

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PHOTO: Wilmer Matamoros, 23, an active Mara Salvatrucha gang leader at Tamara Prison, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, 21 February 2006. (AP/Alexandre Meneghini)

Background. The maras have been present in Central America for a relatively short time. In 1989, the Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13, appeared in Honduras, and in the early 1990s, the Mara 18, or M-18, surfaced. Both gangs were the result of the migration of refugees fleeing increasingly deadly engagements between rebel groups and government forces and the heavy-handed actions of state security apparatuses.² Most of these Central American war refugees sought shelter in the United States, especially in Los Angeles in areas already infested by gangs. To assimilate into their communities in the United States and just to be able to survive, the children of these refugees either joined or formed street gangs, and many members of these gangs eventually returned to their home countries to victimize the region's societies.

Mara predominance. Among the groups that came to prominence in Los Angeles were the aforementioned M-18 and MS-13, which derived their names from the city areas in which they operated. M-18 was an existing gang made up primarily

of Mexican youths, while immigrants who had fled the fighting in El Salvador formed MS-13. These nationalities gave the gangs their identities, although both gangs later added immigrants from Honduras and Guatemala, and some Mexican youths also joined the MS-13.

Clear lines demarcated the territorial turf in Los Angeles of local gangs and the immigrant gangs from Mexico and Central America. Leaders who controlled the latter gangs called themselves the Mexican Mafia, an organization that continues to influence the policies that guide the MS-13 and the M-18 in Mexico and Central America.

The gangs' theaters of operations in Los Angeles proved to be fertile soil for training to carry out illicit activities. The gangs interacted violently and contended with groups of similar ideology, whose members all had the same socioeconomic background and pressing need to survive. Their participation in thuggish acts and their encounters with the law resulted in a great many members being imprisoned and later deported to their countries of



AFP/Elmer Martinez

Two members of Mara Salvatrucha show off their tattoos in a national prison located in Tamara, 30 kilometers outside of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, February 2006.

origin, a process that saw an upswing in 1998 and 1999. The deportees rapidly became gang leaders in their home countries, using the “knowledge” they had acquired in the barrios and prisons of Los Angeles to recruit members who had similar habits of conduct and economic limitations, and who were willing to listen to and follow them.

Presence in Central America

Mara activities, especially those of the Salvatrucha and M-18 gangs, first began in El Salvador and Honduras, and a little later in Guatemala. There were already gangs, known as *barrio cliques*, present in these countries before the massive influx of deportees from the United States; however, their activities were limited to scribbling graffiti on barrio walls and occasionally robbing small markets or assaulting persons who passed through their “territory.”

Because of the influence of the Mexican Mafia in Los Angeles, the gangs that operated in Central America employed practices, structures, and integration similar to those used in the United States. This generated inter-gang warfare, which led to the absorption of smaller groups by the MS-13 and the M-18 and the formation of a bipolar gang system.

Growth. It didn’t take long before the gangs realized they could operate with relative impunity due to the state’s lack of authority and presence in the poorest sections of the region’s large cities. A surge in gang growth and activity ensued. Gang members built homemade firearms, known as *hechizas* or *chimbas*, to attack people and businesses in the poor neighborhoods in which they operated. They also began to venture outside their barrios to extend their radius of action, and in the process became more adept at their “trade.” Soon after, the gangs devised a “war tax,” a form of extortion in which they demanded payment for the right to move freely through their areas without being molested or assaulted. Their principal targets were traveling vendors who sold refreshments, bread, and other foodstuffs.

The gangs grew in size because many youths believed that joining the maras was a way to escape economic problems. Being gang members gave them special rank in their community, and respect—albeit respect born out of fear. Gang numbers also grew by forced induction, which occurred when mara members pressured youths who came from more stable family environments and normally

attended school to join them. These kids were subjected to verbal and physical abuse—theft of their belongings, destruction of their schoolbooks, and even rape and murder in some cases.

The maras quickly proliferated in almost all marginalized neighborhoods and then began to make inroads in major urban areas, where they assaulted people, destroyed private property, and challenged the state’s authority. There have been reports of cases in which the maras took to the streets, allegedly in support of unions on strike or protest, and fomented disorder and chaos. Now the maras can be found in middle-class neighborhoods distributing drugs, especially cocaine and marijuana.

Operations and alliances. The growth of mara membership and reach seems to rely on very careful planning that could include some form of support from other organizations, such as organized crime syndicates or rogue elements of the state security apparatuses. There are, for example, concrete examples of policemen arrested for their ties to gangs (as well as for carjacking, kidnapping, and narcotics trafficking).³

The level of organization achieved, especially by MS-13, has facilitated stronger links with narcotics-trafficking cartels, which see a magnificent opportunity to spread their tentacles. No longer will the cartels just transport drugs between Colombia and the United States; now they seek to establish an internal distribution network. An alliance with the maras also allows them to easily infiltrate schools and middle-income residential areas. Indeed, there has been an increase in the quantity of drugs that stay in Central America due to the Colombian cartel’s change in strategy. The traffickers now pay their mara intermediaries in drugs rather than in cash.

The relationship between narcotics traffickers and the maras is a dangerous development, not only because of the increase in drugs in the affected countries, but also due to the terrible consequences drug use brings with it. Foremost among the latter are damage to the state’s governance and harm to its youth, plus the better-structured, better-armed organizations that drug money has allowed the maras to achieve. The maras have graduated from makeshift chimba firearms to AK-47s and automatic pistols, and are now more lethal and more difficult to control.

Opportunities have also emerged for the maras in other areas. The illicit trafficking in persons, especially immigrants seeking entry into the United States, has become a very lucrative market for the gangs. One need only consider the price of \$3,000 to \$5,000 per person that traditional intermediaries (coyotes) charge, then multiply that by approximately 5,000 illegal immigrants a month, to get an idea of the magnitude of this problem.⁴ Clearly, the maras are expanding their horizons at the expense of efforts by Central American nations to improve their citizens' economic conditions. Globalization has reached criminal organizations, too!

Changes in strategy. We must also consider the maras' new strategy. To evade capture, they no longer require new inductees to display tattoos, and they allow members to remove them; they obtain credentials from rehabilitation centers; they have changed their dress codes; and they avoid using their old hand signals to communicate. This is all part of a process designed to hide their gang membership and confuse the authorities. Known as "natural gangsters," these gang members do not express their philosophy in external symbols, but in mind and spirit.⁵

Effects of Mara Activities

Who could have foreseen the mara phenomenon? Some analysts think that the gangs' capabilities will continue to grow unless governments come up with a well-defined strategy to control and rehabilitate gang members and then reintroduce them into society. The maras have the financial resources necessary for continued growth. If they continue to grow, the reach of their criminal activities is left open to the imagination; in fact, they could even threaten the governance of democratic Central American states. Nor would it be outlandish to think that the maras could become involved in terrorist activities.

The maras could infiltrate governments and join police and armed forces and judicial systems. What better way for the maras to familiarize themselves with weapons and ascertain the locations of armories? Already there are reported cases of

gang members joining the military, thus putting the recruiting process at risk.

Just the opposite has occurred in Guatemala where, after the government drastically reduced the number of soldiers in the army, an unknown number of ex-soldiers have joined the military arm of certain narcotics trafficking cartels. This ironic turn of events makes us ponder which policies to pursue. Should we strengthen our security forces or reduce them? However, the answer to that question would be the subject of a different work: an investigation.

In addition, we must not lose sight of the fact that the hard-core elements of the maras kill simply to satisfy an urge—no moral or legal inhibition governs their behavior. They have become accustomed to this by their fellow members' demands to kill as a prerequisite for admission into the maras and as a result of leadership struggles with members of other gangs. In the end, killing for the mara member is like going to the supermarket. Obviously, the ramifications of such viciousness threaten decent and hard-working societies that already feel unprotected by ineffective justice systems.

Countering the Threat

A national and regional interagency effort is needed to counter a threat of the maras' magnitude and nature. The presidential summits held by the governments of the Central American Integration System have been one attempt to answer this need. They have resolved to take measures to reduce the mara threat that is present in the region.⁶

Participants in this effort include members of the justice system, the armed forces, and the internal security forces of the affected countries. Each country has created rapid-response forces to respond to situations that require internal, multilateral, or bilateral action. The police forces of El Salvador and Guatemala cooperate and coordinate actions along their shared border. Similar efforts are under way to improve the methods of apprehending mara members, so that police forces can arrest gang members in countries other than the ones in which they committed their crimes.

The maras could infiltrate governments and join police and armed forces and judicial systems.

Central American police forces also belong to an association in which they discuss regional problems in order to combat criminals more effectively. This being a clear reflection of the justice systems' interest in working together to achieve common goals, the region's prosecutors and judges have also organized for more effective cooperation. In support of the national police forces, member countries of the Armed Forces Conference of Central America have developed plans to counter organized crime through joint efforts to prevent and counteract terrorism, narcotics trafficking, and related crimes. These joint actions are performed internally in each country.

Interagency action is absolutely necessary to compensate for the region's limited number of policemen, vehicles, helicopters, intelligence systems, and communications equipment. The pooling of resources at the regional level also improves response capabilities and increases the effectiveness of police actions.

Among all of the elements needed to support and improve policing actions, effective intelligence systems should have priority. Without accurate information, it will be difficult to achieve desired results. In this particular scenario, international cooperation can greatly help reduce the disparity in forces.

International cooperation. Even a cooperative, coordinated regional effort is insufficient, by itself, to thwart the maras. Central American countries have very limited resources with which to counter the maras (and similar transnational threats) and require international support to guarantee the effectiveness of their actions. Countries with interests in the region should consider establishing a "Plan Centroamérica." Such a plan would have to be endorsed by Central America's governments and backed by Colombia, Mexico, and the United States. The latter countries would commit to contributing the resources that the cosignatories cannot supply. Both the cosignatories and the plan's backers would benefit considerably: all have something to lose and much to gain.

Why Colombia, Mexico, and the United States? Because in addition to having common land and



AFP/Olindo Sierra

Police chiefs from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala attend a tri-national meeting in Esquipulas, Guatemala, addressing mutual concerns regarding border security, organized crime, human trafficking, robbery, carjacking, narcotics trafficking, and youth gangs, 6 October 2006.

maritime borders with the Central American isthmus, drug trafficking is one of their biggest problems. Mara participation in drug trafficking will only increase in the future, as will the related activities of arms and human trafficking. Facing such organized crime, none of these countries can feel secure. As the following facts illustrate, the vicious circle is already underway:

- Links between narcotics trafficking groups and narco-terrorist groups have been established. Colombian authorities have intercepted shipments of arms originating in Central America and destined for armed groups in Colombia.

- Mexico has tracked the number of immigrants from Central and South American countries who transit through its territory en route to the United States and, according to police sources, has confirmed mara involvement in illegal immigration.

- The United States is the final destination of most of the cocaine produced in Colombia, a great deal of which passes through Central America. In addition, the United States cannot afford to ignore the growing numbers of maras entering the U.S. over the past few years as a result of Central American immigration.

Thus, the three nations have a stake in addressing and cooperating to solve these interrelated conditions that are overwhelming Central America. We

are all obliged to set in motion mechanisms that will complement one another and rein in the gangs, and we must do it before the gangs become a danger of such magnitude that controlling them will be exceedingly difficult and costly.

Much-needed assistance might include, among others steps, information exchange, joint operations, logistic support, training and education, communications equipment, and air, naval, and ground transportation. At first glance, such support might be considered excessive, but we must remember that the enemy is operating with virtually unlimited resources. If we measure the requirements in comparison to what is at stake, they appear much more reasonable by far. Logically, such assistance would have to be addressed and defined in concrete plans and authorized by those countries participating in anti-gang operations.

Judicial framework. To ensure that regional and extra-regional efforts succeed, we should consider a regulatory and judicial framework that would permit fluid, dynamic interaction between authorities in all the affected countries. The Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, signed by most Central American nations and the United States, is a model of the instrument necessary for such interaction. This new treaty authorizes actions that could otherwise not be performed due to the existing limitations imposed by each country's internal laws.

We should consider a regional treaty to put these plans into operation because it would be more effective than separate legislation in each country. Separate legislation would take too much time to enact, losing the opportunity and the momentum of an immediate offensive to reduce the maras' role in drug, arms, and people trafficking.

To complement the treaty, we must also reform the laws related to gang acts because current penal codes do not address all the kinds of crimes the maras perpetrate. We must classify gang-related crimes as such and impose stiffer sentences than the penalties for the same offenses committed by those who are not gang members. In order to manage prisoners better, we must reform prison regulations, especially those related to controlling the activities of incarcerated gang members.⁷ Currently, mara leaders who are detained continue to exercise control over their gangs by using cell phones to communicate with foot soldiers outside the prison.

Preventing Mara Growth

Preventing mara crime is an obligation not only of the state, but of society. All sectors of society should participate in the prevention process. This requires well-planned and organized support that includes, among other things, preparing communities to confront the mara problem and contributing effectively to orienting youths toward non-criminal activities. Furthermore, the appropriate authorities must place greater emphasis on education and on improving the quality of the educational system. They should demand that students be supervised more closely to ensure they complete school. Parents should also assume this role.

Communities. Communities should build sports and cultural facilities and programs that encourage youth participation. The more organized these efforts are, the higher the probability of success, as evidenced by such programs as "Safer Communities" and "Citizen Safety Assemblies."⁸ Based on rapprochement between the authorities and communities, these programs build and strengthen teamwork, which can lead to such initiatives as reporting irregular or illicit activities, taking measures to prevent those activities, improving the level of community coexistence, reinforcing the family unit, and, in the long term, offering a better orientation to youths in the community.

Special instruction. Technical schools provide excellent opportunities to teach at-risk youths trades that can earn them a decent, honest living. A current shortage of qualified technical personnel in the private sector, especially in assembly plants, would allow for quick job placement.

Concerned about the growth of the maras, the police have designed a series of programs aimed at prevention, invested the necessary resources in them, and made them available to the population and state institutions. Among them are—

- EREM (Education to Resist and Avoid the Maras), a 15-lesson course targeting 5th- and 6th-graders that describes what the maras really are and what youths should do to avoid joining them.
- *Desafíos* (Challenges), a program that teaches adolescent students how to recognize mara behavior, music, dress codes, sexual habits, and drug use.
- *Despertad* (Wake Up), a module to educate parents on the mara threat.
- COBAMA (Basic Knowledge of the Maras), a curriculum meant to educate judges, prosecutors, police, and other justice agents about the maras.⁹

One must not lose sight of the fact that poverty, unemployment, lack of public services, and other social ills have prompted many youths to join the maras. If we give these young people opportunities to improve their lives, such as learning a trade or having a respectable job, we can still rescue them.

Rehabilitation

Currently, there are nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and religious groups in almost every country in the region that offer rehabilitation services to mara youths. However, the relative lack of resources they have to tend to such a widespread problem has limited their success.¹⁰ Other sectors of society should support the NGO/religious group effort, either by emulating it or by contributing money, food, equipment, installations, land, or similar support.

To enhance the prospects of real rehabilitation, we should also enlist psychologists, sociologists, doctors, social workers, and other professionals who can penetrate the minds and spirits of these youths. In short, we cannot provide only education or a trade; the moral and psychological aspects also weigh heavily in the mara reclamation process.

Debt relief. The countries of the region that have benefited from external debt relief have an obligation to use their freed-up resources to reduce poverty.¹¹ They should invest their newly available funds in programs to rehabilitate youths who come from disadvantaged sectors of society where poverty leads to social imbalance and facilitates participation in illegal acts.

Managing resources. Because governments typically do not manage rehabilitation programs well, we should put the resources for such programs in the hands of those NGOs and religious groups already on the job, so that they can strengthen and expand their operational capacity. Governments should play only a supervisory role to ensure that the groups are using the funds

within established parameters and rehabilitating the number of persons mandated in each country's annual goals.

Certain organizations with sufficient resources can finance these programs as well. We must appeal to friendly countries to assign a high priority to the region's social programs and to contribute to their operation.

Armed forces participation. The armed forces could also join the rehabilitation effort by setting up special courses to reclaim mara youths. They have the capacity in terms of space and human resources, as well as the willingness. What they lack is the program design and financial support necessary to execute such an undertaking.

Given that funds are available, the region's militaries could employ rehabilitated gang members in a special program that protects and maintains water basins supplying the region's major cities. Water might become the source of disputes or wars in the near future, as oil fields are now. A program that protects the water supply can produce a side benefit: the rehabilitation of mara members through productive employment.

It goes without saying that we must exercise great care in selecting youths for such programs. We



Members of the Mara-18 youth gang in a rehabilitation process with the "Bautista de Avivamiento" church pray upon their arrival at Conchalio beach, La Libertad, El Salvador, 23 March 2005.

must ensure that those who participate are capable of being rescued and are willing to actively seek rehabilitation. The authorities must also follow up with the participants to guarantee their success and continuing rehabilitation.

Technical schools also fall within the scope of the armed forces' assistance. Soldiers learn trades that later enable them to reenter civilian society and engage in law-abiding, economically productive activities. Why not increase the capacity of these schools and place them in strategic locations near big cities or development areas with assembly plants, so that graduates can obtain employment with relative ease? Training in a military environment can be a positive force in developing character and personality, especially the discipline, moral values, and patriotism former gang members will need to lead successful lives.

We Need to Act Now

Although the mara problem in Central America mainly affects Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, the region's other countries should not consider themselves immune: most of the conditions that have given rise to the maras' appearance in the region's northern triangle are also present in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. Sooner rather than later, these countries will experience similar problems. The mara threat is a serious one. Not controlling it increases risks to the social and democratic stability of the region and has consequences for Mexico and the United States, our neighbors to the north.

Gangs are growing faster than Central America's economies, a situation that calls for immediate action. Not to act would be catastrophic because the maras' expansion in the criminal realm clearly strengthens their ties to organized crime. This relationship further expands the gangs' horizons by increasing their financial and logistic resources. Add to this a greater ability to infiltrate the different sectors of society, especially the public sector, by buying the influence of key people in the government apparatus, and the seriousness of the problem becomes even clearer. The democratic viability of the region's countries would be imperiled and opportunities to effectively combat the maras lost.

All sectors of society must participate in designing strategies and defining policies to manage the different stages of the mara problem and its

causes—poverty, unemployment, lack of hope. Governments must take the lead and use their collective powers to unite their societies in this joint endeavor.

The task will not be easy, but doing nothing will put the region's social and economic stability and that of its neighbors at risk. Right now, Central America has a great window of opportunity to improve upon what it has accomplished thus far. It can generate opportunities for thousands of its citizens to gain decent employment, thus enabling them to overcome the conditions in which they now live. At the same time, there is an obligation to improve the region's educational and health systems. Without improvements in these areas, Central America will not be able to break free of underdevelopment and mediocrity.

It is time to control the maras. A great deal of valuable time has been invested in studies and planning, but so far they have yielded few concrete results. Now is the time to act; the conditions are ripe for doing so. Not to act now will set us up for future regrets. We cannot allow people who love their country to be forced to leave it, nor should those who stay have to live in a state of constant anxiety. If we do not act now, we had better prepare for a grim future, one in which we live under the thumb of a government ruled by drug traffickers with the maras as its armed forces. **MR**

NOTES

1. "Embajador de EE.UU. ante El Salvador, Douglas Barclay, censurando tribunales de paz por el sobreesimiento de imputados de delitos graves, hasta por secuestro," *El Diario de Hoy* (San Salvador), 18 October, 2-3.

2. Mara Prevention Unit of the General Directorate of Preventive Police of the Republic of Honduras; interview with sociologist Ramón Romero, advisor to ex-President Ricardo Maduro of Honduras.

3. "Capturan dos Policías vinculados con Mama Tere," *Diario La Tribuna de Honduras* (Tegucigalpa), 20 October 2006, 111.

4. Miguel Pickard, *In the Crossfire: Mesoamerican Migrants Journey North*, 18 October 2005, General Directorate of Migration of the Secretary of the Interior and Justice of Honduras.

5. Mara Prevention Unit of the General Directorate of Preventive Police of the Republic of Honduras.

6. Central American Presidential Summit, in Tegucigalpa, 2005. In attendance were the presidents of Belize, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Mexico, and Panama.

7. "Privilegios se acabarán," *Prensa Libre de Guatemala* (Guatemala City), 19 October 2006, 10; and *El Diario de Hoy* (El Salvador), 18 October 2006, 31; Director del Sistema Penitenciario Alejandro Giammattei, "Adquisición de bloqueadores de teléfonos celulares," *Lucha contra la Corrupción y el Amedrentamiento*.

8. The administrations of former president Ricardo Maduro and current president Manuel Zelaya Rosales, Republic of Honduras, conceived the Safer Community and Citizen Safety Assemblies programs.

9. Mara Prevention Unit of the General Directorate of Preventive Police of the Republic of Honduras.

10. Among the groups dedicated to the rehabilitation of former mara members are Reverend Mario Fumero's Project Victory and organizations run by Monsignor Rómulo Emiliani, San Pedro Sula Diocese. Both men are from Honduras.

11. Honduras and Nicaragua benefited from external debt relief through the World Bank, and there are expectations that the International Development Bank will also excuse debts accrued by the two countries.

We the People Are Not THE CENTER OF GRAVITY in an Insurgency

Major Mark P. Krieger Jr., U.S. Army

EVEN THOUGH THE CONSENSUS among writers, thinkers, and school curriculums about an insurgency's center of gravity (COG) seems to be that it is the people, this is not the case. An insurgency's true strategic center of gravity is its cause.

Military thinkers and planners often identify the people as the COG in an insurgency because the people represent a tangible target against which the elements of national power, particularly military power, can be applied and their effectiveness measured. While this seems acceptable on the surface, it reflects a lack of understanding of the COG concept, a limited perception of the COG analysis process, and a targeting methodology that is stuck in the cold-war era and does not recognize the importance and effectiveness of intangible variables. Because the military's current fight against terrorists and insurgents does not follow the templates of the past, it requires innovative, adaptive thinking.

This essay will challenge the notion that the people are the center of gravity in an insurgency. It will argue that an insurgency's cause is its strategic COG, will identify the insurgency's administrative organization as the operational COG that links the insurgency at the strategic and tactical levels of war, and will show the interdependent relationship of all three (cause, organization, and people).

Defining Centers of Gravity

Joint Publication (JP) 1-02 defines center of gravity as "those characteristics, capabilities, or sources of power from which a military force derives its freedom of action, physical strength, or will to fight."¹ The final draft of JP 3-0 refines the definition to "the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act."² JP 3-0's changes are significant for three reasons: moral and physical strength are recognized equally; the word *capabilities* is removed, suggesting that a COG does not necessarily need to provide a capability on its own; and *will to fight* is replaced by *will to act*, further acknowledging the significance of the non-physical environment. This draft definition is attempting to keep pace with reality and will help military planners better conceptualize COGs.

The debate over defining *center of gravity* surfaces when planners try to identify enemy COGs. The current joint definition notwithstanding, each service has its own operational art and takes its own approach to defining and applying the COG concept.³ The Army sees COGs as sources of strength to mass its capabilities against and destroy. The Air Force sees them as targets for air power. The Navy and Marine Corps believe that they are weaknesses to attack and exploit.⁴

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Carl von Clausewitz defined *center of gravity* as the “hub of all power and movement,” but some military thinkers debate whether his theories are relevant to today’s battlefield.⁵ Recent writers on the topic define COG in ways that reflect the changing environment in which our military operates. Colonel Antulio Echevarria, for example, takes a *focal point* approach, arguing that COGs hold a combatant’s entire system or structure together and draw power from a variety of sources.⁶ This means that a COG is centripetal in nature and unifies an effort or draws resources toward it. Echevarria also suggests that once those resources are pulled in, a COG is able to direct their employment. This differs from the joint definition, which focuses on what a COG can project or is capable of, not on its ability to draw and direct additional sources.

Taking an approach aligned, not surprisingly, with the U.S. Air Force’s targeting procedure, Air Force Colonel John Warden applies systems theory to define COG.⁷ Warden suggests that a leader is always at the core of a COG. This leader is the first ring of a five-ring system, of which the remaining four rings (from the center out) are organic essentials (basic needs like food, water, and shelter), infrastructure, population, and fielded military. Moreover, each ring, a subsystem of the larger system, is itself made up of subsystems. While Warden’s systems and subsystems description seems appropriate, it oversimplifies the targeting process by minimizing the complexities of the interaction between the levels of war. In addition, the approach might not be appropriate for insurgencies, where air power is less effective than against conventional forces and targets.

COG Characteristics

Regardless of the theory, most definitions agree that COGs are always sources of strength, never weaknesses. Independent of the limitations of a definition, COGs have characteristics that may make it easier to understand their theory and application.

- *There is a single COG at the strategic level of war and one at the operational level; the tactical level of war has decisive points.* Tactical decisive points protect the operational COG, which in turn protects the strategic COG. This partially explains the interdependence of the different levels of war and their corresponding COGs and decisive points.

COG CHARACTERISTICS

- There is a single COG at the strategic level of war and one at the operational level; the tactical level of war has decisive points.
- COGs may adapt or change as the environment or conditions change.
- COGs organize and direct the critical capabilities—tangible (physical) or intangible (psychological)—that they provide.
- It is not always necessary to destroy a COG.

In an insurgency, the people (a tactical decisive point) protect the insurgency’s organization (the operational COG) through their willing or coerced, active or passive support, thereby allowing the insurgency to conduct daily operations with relative security. With its organization protected and free to operate, the insurgency is better able to provide the services the people desire and to offer a preferable alternative to the current (typically governmental) authority. The insurgency’s ability to provide needed services not only gains it additional support from the people, but it also generates support for the insurgency’s cause—its strategic COG. This cycle of increasing protective support is evidence of the interdependent nature of strategic and operational COGs and tactical decisive points.

- *COGs may adapt or change as the environment or conditions change.* When a COG fails to be a centripetal force that draws and directs resources and instead becomes a weakness or vulnerability, it must adapt or be destroyed. Assume that an organizational system, for example a political organization, is the operational COG. It provides the link between the strategic COG and tactical decisive points. If the organization is attacked and functionally destroyed, then a new operational COG must emerge. If it does not, there will be no link between the strategic and tactical levels of war. Without the protection of the organizational COG, the strategic COG’s ability to utilize its resources is diminished, it becomes increasingly vulnerable to attack, and it risks destruction. When this occurs, the system represents weakness rather than strength and fails to act as a COG.

The same rationale holds true any time there is weakness in the COG's protective layers. For example, if an insurgency does not have popular support, the people constitute a weakness that makes the organization vulnerable. The organization's vulnerability, in turn, makes the cause vulnerable. To overcome this weakness, insurgents may resort to techniques that coerce support from the people.

- *COGs organize and direct the critical capabilities—tangible (physical) or intangible (psychological)—that they provide.* It is the synergy of these capabilities that allows the COG to project power beyond its own strength. The strength of the capabilities and the layered protection described earlier make it difficult to attack a COG directly or to destroy it with a single blow; however, attacking a COG indirectly weakens its capabilities to the point where it may no longer provide synergy, direction, organization, and strength.

- *It is not always necessary to destroy a COG.* One may achieve the same effect by rendering the COG incapable of performing its function or unwilling to perform it.

Understanding the Importance of the Cause

In *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, David Galula posits that the only strength an insurgency has initially is the ideological power of its cause. According to Galula, the cause is the most necessary prerequisite for an insurgency.⁸ It is what attracts support; it is the centripetal force that Echevarria argues draws additional resources to it. Without a cause, there is nothing for the people to support actively, passively, willingly, or unwillingly. The purpose of the cause is to draw the greatest number of supporters while decreasing the appeal of its opponents. Synthesizing the people's

grievances and crafting them into a simple message the people can identify with separates a strong cause that draws the greatest support from a weak cause that fails to attract potential supporters. Put another way, the insurgency's cause is a system made up of the people's grievances. This seems to capture the essence of Warden's and Echevarria's arguments: an insurgency is a system made up of subsystems that draw resources.

An insurgency must be identified with the cause completely, the population must be attracted to the cause, and the counterinsurgency should not be able to adopt the cause without significantly reducing its own power.⁹ If any of these conditions are not met, there is weakness, and the insurgency must modify its cause or eventually fail. For these reasons, an insurgency's cause is its strategic COG. Without a cause, there is no insurgency. With a weak one, an insurgency is critically vulnerable to government response.

The Naga Insurgency

The Naga insurgency in India illustrates the importance of an insurgency's cause and is a good example of what happens when an insurgency becomes preoccupied and neglects its cause. The Naga insurgency began in 1947, the same year India gained independence from Britain. Believing that the state of Nagaland was part of the country and that its tribes fell under the authority of the Indian constitution, India began to govern Nagaland.

The insurgency formed because the Naga tribes along the India-Burma border did not identify with India culturally or ethnically and wanted to form a separate, sovereign nation.¹⁰ Initially, the insurgency had popular support because its organization addressed grievances that had existed for decades. However, in 1948, a split occurred in the insurgency, and two competing factions emerged.¹¹ Competition for the people's support led to guerrilla infighting that distracted the insurgents' attention and resources from their original cause and weakened both factions in the fight. Preoccupied with infighting, the organizations of both factions failed to perform their roles as operational COGs, failed to link the strategic level of war to the tactical level of war as before, and failed to address the people's grievances.

Of course, a complete analysis of the Naga insurgency cannot overlook the Indian government's strong response to it. Nonetheless, competing

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Naga organizations failed to protect their strategic COG, the cause, by maintaining popular support, a critical decisive point. Unable to overcome the preoccupation weakening their operational COGs, neither Naga faction could unify supporters. Over time, support for the overall cause dwindled. The people did not see either party as a preferable alternative to the Indian government. At best, the Naga insurgency was a political reform movement in an Indian society tolerant of political disagreement.

The Naga insurgency illustrates several other points about COGs. It supports the argument for the cause as the strategic COG, the organization as the operational COG, and the people as a tactical-level decisive point. It shows the interdependence of all three and how weakening one of the COGs and its protective layering can lead to the collapse of the entire system. Using Echevarria's focal point theory, one could argue that the insurgency's cause failed to provide unity and the necessary centripetal force to gather additional resources. The Naga insurgency also shows that one can render a COG ineffective by preoccupying it; there may be no need to destroy it directly. In the Naga case, the split in the insurgency prevented opposing factions from focusing all their efforts on achieving their original goals.

Strategic COG: The Cause

If an insurgency's cause is a synthesis of the people's grievances, an effective cause must incorporate those grievances in a way the people can identify with and actively support. This is the responsibility of the insurgency's political or administrative organization, its operational-level COG, which turns grievances into slogans and messages.

Grievances alone, however, cannot be the strategic COG. Individually, grievances cannot draw upon,

create, organize, and apply resources (although collectively, in the form of a cause administered by an organization, they can). Moreover, individual grievances are vulnerable to attack: if the counterinsurgency addresses each grievance individually, it can reduce the support that grievances elicit for insurgencies. (Conversely, by trying to remedy each grievance separately, the counterinsurgency risks legitimizing or justifying the insurgency's existence and potentially reducing its own power in the process.)

Operational COG: The Organization

A cause attracts support that leads to the formation of an insurgency's initial political-administrative organization. This organization becomes the insurgency's operational COG. It protects the cause (the strategic COG) by the way it administers the insurgency's continuing operations. Although insurgents have no responsibility to provide for the people early on, they gain popular support by providing such services. (Warden discusses these organic essentials in his five-ring model.) The better insurgents do this, the more support they acquire for their cause. In short, effective administration on behalf of the cause protects the strength of the cause. Later, as the insurgency matures, it can consolidate its gains by maintaining order and providing increasing services to the people.

Tactical Decisive Point: The People

The people are critical to the success of both the insurgency and counterinsurgency. In fact, because the people provide a tangible target against which to apply military power, military planners are comfortable with thinking they (the people) are the COG. But while the people are key terrain, a critical resource, an objective for both sides to dominate, and a decisive point, that does not make them a COG.

If the people are equally important to the success of both the insurgency and counterinsurgency, and the battle is decided by each side's ability to gain as much support as possible from the people, then the people are the decisive factor in every operation. The varying definitions of, and theories about, COGs commonly suggest they are sources of strength, never sources of weakness. At the beginning of an insurgency, the support of the people is

If an insurgency's cause is a synthesis of the people's grievances, an effective cause must incorporate those grievances in a way the people can identify with and actively support.

minimal and therefore not a source of strength. Foco theory suggests that an insurgency can take violent action without the initial support of the people and gain popular support later through those actions: as the insurgency's cause becomes known, some people will support it willingly, and others after being coerced.

The people define the battlespace. They determine what is acceptable and unacceptable by providing or withholding support and resisting coercion from either side. They also provide critical resources such as recruits, leaders, logistical supply lines, and information. The need to influence the people's decision-making process makes the people an objective for both sides.¹² For these reasons, the people are not a COG at any level of war; they are a decisive point equally important to both sides.

Those who believe that the people are the COG in an insurgency fail to answer several questions. At what level of war are the people a COG? Military planners tend to think tactically; however, by focusing on the tactical level, they ignore the true sources of strength—those that link the strategic and operational levels of war to the tactical. What are the links between the levels? Are they interdependent, or do they exist in isolation? How does one protect the other? What are some tactical decisive points? Those who believe the people are the COG rarely answer these questions. Hopefully, this article in some measure has.

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Conclusions

An insurgency's cause is its strategic COG, its organization is its operational COG, and the people are a decisive point at the tactical level. The population is critically important in an insurgency, but it is not a COG. Although military historian Colin Beer (*On Revolutionary War*, 1990) never uses the term *center of gravity*, he appears to concur with this

analysis when he asserts that “the main ingredient [of an insurgency] will be a sound doctrine which will sustain the dedicated few along their long road.”¹³ It is understandable why those charged with counterinsurgency operations gravitate towards identifying the people as the COG: the people are a tangible entity to target using typical methods for planning and execution, whereas attacking something as ambiguous, intangible, and conceptually unfamiliar as a cause, an ideology, or a system of beliefs is difficult and may not yield results for months or years. Some cultures measure time in generations, so how do you measure the effectiveness of your efforts on future generations? How do you do so during a one-year deployment? It is difficult to remain confident that your efforts are effective when the results will only be evident in the history your children read in school textbooks years later.

In the end, successfully targeting and attacking the strategic COG, the cause, directly or indirectly will cause the entire insurgency to fail. That is the essence of a COG: its defeat leads to overall defeat. Attacking an insurgency's organization will weaken its ability to protect its cause and its ability to link its cause with the people. If this occurs, the strategic COG becomes vulnerable to attack and is at greater risk of destruction. **MR**

NOTES

1. U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 12 April 2001), <<http://jdeis.comerstoneindustry.com/jdeis/dictionary/def.jsp?word=centers+of+gravity>>.
2. This comes from a joint doctrine update briefing presented 15 February 2006 by Rick Rowlett, U.S. Joint Forces Command, Joint Warfighting Center Joint Doctrine Group. Michael Chychota emailed a copy of the file to me.
3. Mark P. Krieger Jr., *Improving the Joint Staff through a Joint Understanding of Centers of Gravity*, Master's thesis, Webster University, 2005 (np).
4. Major Seow Hiang Lee, *Center of Gravity or Center of Confusion: Understanding the Mystique* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air Command and Staff College Air University, 1999).
5. Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 595.
6. Antulio J. Echevarria II, *Clausewitz's Center of Gravity: Changing Our Warfighting Doctrine—Again!* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2002).
7. John A. Warden, *The Air Campaign: Planning for Combat* (Maxwell Air Force Base AL: National Defense University Press Publication, 1988).
8. David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (St. Petersburg, FL: Hailer Publishing, 1964), 7.
9. Ibid., 19-21. Galula refers to this as the “strategic criteria” of a cause.
10. Ramachandra Guha, “A Question of Honour,” *India Together: The News That Matters*, <www.indiatogether.org/2004/feb/opi-nagapride.htm>.
11. Sashinungla, “Nagaland: Insurgency and Factional Intransigence,” *Faultlines: Writings on Conflict & Resolution*, <www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume16/Article4.htm>.
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A Synchronized Approach to POPULATION CONTROL



Brigadier General Joseph Anderson, U.S. Army, and Colonel Gary Volesky, U.S. Army

MULTI-NATIONAL CORPS-IRAQ'S (MNC-I) GOAL of reducing violence, gaining the support of the Iraqi people, stabilizing Iraq, and enabling the attainment of security self-reliance by the Iraqi Government is under attack by diverse groups that have changed their tactics significantly during the past few years. We must protect and secure the population because of the threat this cycle of violence presents to both coalition forces and the people of Iraq. A critical component in securing the population from the insurgent groups is population control. Right now, population control is a key part of Operation Fardh Al-Qanoon, the Iraqi Government-led security plan for Baghdad, which calls for a number of measures specifically designed to bring stability and security to Iraqis and to protect them from the violence perpetrated by terrorists and militias.

The threats opposing our efforts in Iraq can be divided into the following categories: sectarian violence, Al Qaeda and Al Qaeda-Iraq (AQ/AQI), the Sunni insurgency (former regime members/Ba'athists), Shi'a extremists (militias), and Shi'a-on-Shi'a violence. Originally, coalition forces were the primary focus of attacks because the enemy's goal was to force us out of Iraq. The threat these groups posed directly affected our efforts to provide the security and stability that would allow the Iraqi Government to build the capacity to secure its territory, to increase its ability to provide for and meet the needs of its population, and to earn it legitimacy in the eyes of the people. While a coalition withdrawal remains the enemy's primary objective, the elements confronting us have expanded their vision to defining Iraq after we leave. Some of their most frequently mentioned objectives are to expand their power base, regain lost influence and power throughout Iraq, and establish a safe haven to facilitate the creation of a caliphate.

A key part of the groups' strategy to achieve their end state involves the Iraqi population. Some groups, such as Jaysh al-Mahdi, promote themselves as the protectors of a certain segment of the population (Sunni and Shi'a). This is a classic insurgency strategy. Other groups, such as AQI, target certain segments of the population along sectarian lines by using suicide vehicle-borne

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PHOTO: An Iraqi Soldier patrols in the Rusafa district, Baghdad, Iraq, 21 February 2007. (U.S. Army/SGT Curt Cashour, MNC-I Public Affairs)

improvised explosive devices (SVBIEDs), suicide-vest improvised explosive devices (SVIEDs), and other means to kill as many civilians as possible. The lethal targeting of civilians is intended to terrorize the population, demonstrate the government's and Iraqi Security Forces' (ISF) inability to protect the people, and, most importantly, provoke a violent response along sectarian lines. To some extent, it has worked, creating a cycle of violence that continues to destabilize the country and prevent the government from building the capacity and setting the conditions that will eventually lead to self-reliance. This cycle of violence poses the biggest problem to the coalition as it attempts to achieve its desired goal of stability in Iraq.

The employment of population control measures to secure the populace is one effective tool the coalition can use to break the cycle of violence. Population control measures include physical activities meant to protect the population; influence operations that engage key leaders and an information operations strategy to build support for our actions; and the promotion, coordination, and facilitation of economic opportunities to reduce the pool of disenfranchised communities that enemy forces can rely on for support.

Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, discusses population control measures and the role they play

in the overall counterinsurgency effort: "Population control includes determining who lives in an area and what they do. This task requires determining societal relationships—family, clan, tribe, interpersonal, and professional. Establishing control normally begins with conducting a census and issuing identification cards."^{*}

Population control, however, cannot be solely focused on actions at the tactical level that center on restricting movement or acquiring data on the population. Strategic and operational-level leaders must plan, coordinate, and execute activities that set the conditions for success at the tactical level. A plan that is not synchronized at all levels may achieve isolated short-term success, but it will fail to realize the sustainable, long-term success required to reduce violence, build capacity, and establish a stable and viable environment.

Strategic Population Control

Strategic population control in Iraq requires the engagement of leaders at all levels in the coalition, the Iraqi Government, the ISF, and other influential players. For the purpose of this article, engagement is defined as leader discussion and negotiation with an appropriate counterpart in order to gain support or produce a desired effect. The purpose of such engagements is to ensure development and oversight of the critical systems needed to achieve the organization's goal. In the population control arena, the critical systems needing development and oversight at the strategic level are a national identification card system, a census collection and biometrics registration program, a weapons registration program, border points of entry control procedures, strict rule-of-law enforcement policies, a public assembly permit policy, and economic programs that facilitate long-term employment opportunities.

Operational Population Control

Operational population control in Iraq requires continued engagement with key community leaders and the synchronization and allocation of unique resources



U.S. Army/SGT Curt Cashour

An Iraqi soldier with the 3d Battalion, 1st Brigade, 3d Iraqi Army Division, stands guard along with a trooper from the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2d Infantry Division, at a market in Baghdad's Dora neighborhood, 5 April 2007.

available to the operational commander that aid tactical-level operations. Critical actions at the operational level include senior-leader engagement with influential tribal sheiks, prominent religious leaders, and local political leaders; leveraging and allocating intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets to gather information on organizations targeting the population; coordinating public affairs messages between the Iraqi Government, coalition forces, and the ISF; giving up control of MNC-I enablers to subordinate units (i.e., pushing engineer and civil affairs units down to brigades) for tactical operations; and developing an integrated economic plan.

Tactical Population Control

Tactical population control in Iraq requires coalition forces and the ISF to coordinate in providing security. Key tasks are conducting combined offensive operations (cordon and searches and precision strikes) against groups attacking the population; focusing the use of ISR assets on key nodes and locations; increasing friendly visible presence in urban areas through the use of joint security stations, combat outposts, and traffic control points (TCPs); and limiting access to population centers through entry control points (ECPs) and TCPs.

One of the techniques used at the tactical level to protect the population is to create gated communities. These are built with temporary barriers, berms, and other obstacles and incorporate designated ECPs to prevent access by would-be attackers. The technique has proven effective in reducing the number of attacks on population centers and has brought a greater sense of security to many of Baghdad's people. Similar methods used to protect markets and other critical sites are showing positive results throughout Baghdad.

Population Control Risks

When implementing population control measures at the tactical level, commanders must consider how the measures and the resources used to secure the population are perceived, not only by enemy forces, but also by the populations they are intended to secure. While members of a community want security, over time they come to view the measures

used to isolate their community and regulate access into it as impediments to freedom of movement. Elements that oppose our efforts will capitalize on any loss of support among the people; they will put pressure on the government through the media and other conduits to make the coalition and ISF reduce the control measures.

To mitigate any such development, the Iraqi Government and the coalition will define the conditions that must be met before the population control measures are reduced. Failure to develop such a plan may result in significant public opposition to current and future protection measures, as was seen in the Adhamiyah district of Baghdad in April 2007.

Commanders must also consider how enemy forces could take advantage of our control measures even if the community embraces those measures. For example, gating urban areas and establishing ECPs effectively clusters the inhabitants into centralized locations, making them vulnerable to indirect fire and SVBIED and SVIED attacks that may lead them to believe the control measures have made them less secure, not safer. The media will highlight successful attacks, and enemy forces will use the reports to reinforce their claims that the government and coalition forces cannot protect the people.

Regardless of potential vulnerabilities or drawbacks, protecting the population through control measures is a critical component of our strategy to help the Iraqi Government create a stable, secure Iraq. Some of our measures might restrict the freedom of movement of individuals, and we can expect the enemy to use every means available to discredit us and degrade the population's confidence in and support of our efforts. But increased security trumps inconvenience and hollow accusations almost every time. Keeping the Iraqi people safe by implementing temporary control measures will set the conditions for Iraqi self-reliance. To attain our objectives and achieve success, we must synchronize our efforts at all levels and not be deterred. **MR**

NOTES

* Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 5-21.



The Bundeswehr's NEW MEDIA CHALLENGE

Thomas Rid

ARMED FORCES all over the world are struggling to come to grips with a new, aggressive media environment. In the first U.S.-led Iraq War, in 1991, many journalists still used typewriters, and only the large television networks could afford clunky satellite phones; today, slim cell phones are the norm for journalists, soldiers, and even civilians in most war zones. About 2.8 billion phones with built-in cameras, sound recording capabilities, and text-messaging are in use already, and 1.6 million are registered every day.¹ In the 1990s, reporters had a near-monopoly on war coverage; today, soldiers alone publish approximately 1,700 blogs on the Internet, and civilians in war zones publish a fair number of online diaries as well.² During General Norman Schwarzkopf's war, CNN and the BBC were the only providers of moving images; today, Internet video-sharing sites boast footage uploaded by U.S. troops as well as insurgents and militant Islamists. The footage includes recordings of executions, improvised explosive device attacks, and snipings, and the material is available to anyone with a computer, anywhere. This media environment signals a veritable revolution in media affairs. What might its consequences be?

To get a bird's-eye view of a development that is at first glance troubling and dangerous, this article will examine some of the German Army's recent media challenges; discuss several trends of wider significance for those who make policy, war, and news; and put the new media's effects into their proper contexts. It will also look at the new technology's positive aspects and suggest how to deal with the new realities.

Taking Hits

On 25 October 2006, *Bild*, Germany's most popular daily newspaper, published five photographs that shocked the Federal Republic.³ The photos depicted German soldiers in Afghanistan posing with bleached human skulls, exhibiting them as souvenirs and hood ornaments. In a particularly egregious one, a soldier holds a cranium while making sexually explicit gestures. The pictures hit political Berlin like a bomb explosion. Chancellor Angela Merkel said the soldiers' behavior "cannot be excused"; NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer voiced his concern; U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, traveling in Berlin, demanded clarification; and pundits called the German Army's moral fitness into question.⁴ The German Army and Germany's federal attorney launched investigations of 23 suspects, and 6 soldiers were suspended from

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PHOTO: A German reads the "Bild" newspaper in Bremen, Germany, 25 October 2006. Bild shows pictures of German ISAF soldiers posing with a skull and making obscene gestures in Afghanistan. Headline reads: "Bundeswehr scandal in Afghanistan—Shocking photos of German soldiers." (AP Photo/Joerg Sarbach)

service. The “skull affair” had developed into one of the most embarrassing scandals the *Bundeswehr* (Federal Defense Force) ever had to face.

More was to come. On 13 April 2007, *Der Stern*, one of the country’s largest weekly papers, broke another story.⁵ In July 2006, a 90-second video posted on MyVideo.de, the most popular German-language video-sharing site, had shown a German instructor with a soldier dressed in camouflage in a forest in Schleswig-Holstein. The video recorded the instructor telling the soldier to imagine hostile blacks in the Bronx in New York City while he fired his machinegun. The soldier then fired and shouted an obscenity several times in English between bursts. *Der Stern*’s hugely popular website, stern.de, ran an article quoting an activist officer who blamed the Bundeswehr’s “fighter cult” and increased “international operations” for the troops’ behavior. The article came with the MyVideo-application neatly embedded, ready to play with one mouse click.⁶ Aired on German national television on Saturday, 15 April 2007, the video sparked over 600 newspaper reports in the English-language press alone. The German Defense Ministry described the video as “completely unacceptable.”⁷ German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier condemned it while on a mission to New York City, where the Reverend Al Sharpton demanded that President George W. Bush intervene in the affair.⁸ (The Virginia Tech shootings then overshadowed the story.)

Not long before this incident, on 10 March 2007, another video had appeared on the Internet. In the video, a previously unknown Iraqi insurgent group, the Arrows of Righteousness, paraded two hostages before the camera and threatened to kill them unless all German troops withdrew from Afghanistan within ten days.⁹ On 6 February 2007, Arrows of Righteousness had kidnapped 61-year-old Hannelore Krause, a German citizen living in Iraq, and her 20-year-old son, from their Baghdad home. After hearing the video’s demands, the German government said it would not submit to blackmail, and, on 17 March, Germany’s president took the unusual step of addressing the kidnappers in a video message of his own.¹⁰ In reply, the Arrows of Righteousness posted a video on the Al-Hesbah forum, extending the ultimatum for withdrawal by 10 days.¹¹ In the video, weeping and begging the chancellor personally for help, Krause read out,

“Germany was safe before it allied with America in this devilish alliance against what is called terrorism.” As this article goes to press, the Foreign Office’s “crisis staff” is still working on the case.

Setting Trends

The incidents described above depict aberrations and are in no way indicative of the Bundeswehr’s high professional standards. Yet the three incidents are highly instructive. The episodes bring to light five issues that may have a big impact on future military operations and even the perception of Western armies during peacetime.

First, *the new media environment is ubiquitous*. It’s not under control, and it’s nearly impossible to control. Enlisted soldiers tape digital cameras to their tanks’ armor, record incoming close air support, and post the clips online. Jihadists film suicide attacks, sometimes with three camera teams from different angles, cut the material into short clips, and distribute the resulting propaganda in forums. For German soldiers in the presently calmer northern part of Afghanistan, graphic action material is more difficult to come by, so the most popular Internet postings are photo-collections of soldiers with music soundtracks. Viewers leave comments on the videos’ quality, discuss the equipment used, and reminisce about their soldiering. One 39-year-old YouTube-user from the United Kingdom commented on a video provided by a German soldier in Afghanistan by writing: “Shame you can’t get some decent fighting in. I’m sure you’d be good at it. At least you won’t have to resort to ridiculous posing shots.”¹²

The British soldier’s remarks hint at a potential problem. When the Bundeswehr engages in combat action, the stress and strain on its service members will rise, and publishing on the Internet will then become a way to deal with that pressure. “You have two choices—take a valium, or start a blog,” wrote a 24-year-old Iraqi woman in the midst of the rising civil war in her country.¹³ IED attacks create tremendous psychological pressure. In May 2007, approximately 2,300 videos on YouTube.com had the tag “IED.” The top 20 of these, all uploaded within in a year, were viewed about one million times.¹⁴ Mathis Feldhoff, a senior journalist at *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (ZDF, Second German Television) thinks stress-induced publicity will be “a big problem” for the Bundeswehr in the future.¹⁵

Second, *user-generated content, like a telephone conversation, is interactive, unedited, unfiltered, and often emotional.* When Albert Camus traveled to Algeria in January 1956 in an attempt to stem the escalating revolt through a “civil truce,” he thought he would be able “to speak in the name of reason.” However, faced with protests, he wrote with resignation, “Passion carries everything before it. One has to come here to understand.”¹⁶ In today’s new media environment, one no longer has to go there to understand. Many media products arouse passion, on both sides. A U.S. veteran in California created an impressive video compilation of IED and ordnance explosions set to the music of AC/DC’s “Thunderstruck” and uploaded it to the web. He timed the explosions so that the rock group’s drumbeats were coordinated with the detonations.¹⁷

Some insurgent media organizations use even more sophisticated techniques. Many of their videos are available for download in formats that enable mobile phone users to view them on their cell phone screens. Some commentary left on militant forums, such as *alfirdaws.org* (paradise jihad forum), is spontaneous, emotionally intense, full of religious rhetoric, and appeals to audiences with little access to other news. In such Islamic forums, the culture of online participation is as well developed as in American social networking sites, if not more so, and the user-generated content goes beyond that of a telephone conversation: it is public, illustrated, and archived.

Third, *the old media increasingly use the new media.* Although online videos are certainly better targeted and can more easily be viewed on demand than old-media products, one million views a year is a small number compared to the number of viewers watching any regular TV channel. Blogged stories and uploaded clips remain largely unnoticed by the broad public—unless, that is, the mainstream media pick up the story. When the ZDF’s Feldhoff did his report on post-traumatic stress disorder, he interviewed one Marc Obenland, a corporal and computer specialist who had served in Afghanistan in early 2006. After his tour, Obenland posted a 13-minute compilation online that captured the stressful nature of deployment.¹⁸ Feldhoff found it when he researched his report, and then contacted the corporal.

Fourth, *the publication of such material on the Internet can create news value, even if the event occurred in the past or its factual basis is unclear.* Many believe

that newsworthy events must be fresh and accurate, but this is not the case. The full impacts of the skull affair, the racism video, and the Abu Ghraib torture scandal came long after the events occurred. Arab television’s Al-Jazeera offers a more recent example: on 11 April 2007, it broadcast an interview with a representative of the so-called Islamic Army of Iraq (IAI), a terrorist group that had carried out several high-profile attacks against U.S. forces. Al-Jazeera aired an IAI propaganda video of sniper attacks on U.S. Soldiers, complete with Islamic martial music, the group’s logo, and a reference to its website, *iaisite.info*, thus making the group’s propaganda available to Al-Jazeera’s worldwide audience.¹⁹ The material’s date, origin, and accuracy remain unknown—and are irrelevant for the video’s immediate impact.

Fifth, *user-generated content can have a strategic effect.* In the above instances, the actions of enlisted soldiers and a previously unknown militant group had a strategic impact on a national debate. Our adversaries will continue to use their own media outlets to break the political will of democracies. “These videos are a true weapon,” says Lieutenant General Karlheinz Viereck, commander of the Bundeswehr’s operations command and responsible for all German overseas operations.²⁰

If, as Clausewitz wrote, war is an act of force to compel the enemy to obey one’s will, then Internet propaganda videos are particularly efficient weapons: they bypass the use of military force entirely and directly attack the government and the people, two elements of the Prussian theorist’s famous trinity. In response, to calm the public’s outrage after a highly publicized kidnapping in which a Nicholas-Berg-like beheading is a possible escalation scenario, the foreign minister or even the president is often forced to step in, thereby unintentionally acting in the kidnappers’ interest.

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The New Media Embedded

Let us put the issues described above into their relevant contexts. Although available technologies and new media consumption patterns are largely identical worldwide, the political, military, and mass-media environments of the United States differ significantly from those of most of its NATO allies. Again, Germany offers an illustrative case.

The differences are probably the starkest in the political realm. Unlike the U.S., today's Germany is a deeply pacifist society. An unspoken assumption in public discourse is that the use of military force is morally problematical: Germans believe that because their country's militarism wreaked havoc in the past, they had better be careful about using the army. German stabilization operations and provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) in northern Afghanistan are already pushing the public's tolerance of military operations to the limit; the very idea of *Kampfeinsatz*, or combat operations, is a political no-go. Germany's deployment of six Tornado aircraft to Mazar-i-Sharif in Afghanistan's south is one of the most debated foreign policy decisions in 2007: more than 4,000 newspaper articles have been published on the matter, and the Left Party even sued the government in Germany's Supreme Court for breaking international law. One of the government's major lines of defense was that the aircraft would "only" do reconnaissance; they would not support combat operations. One YouTube viewer wrote below a video of German ground troops serving in Afghanistan: "[I hope] your government lets you off the leash so you can go south"—but that scenario remains highly unlikely.²¹

The military context is important. The Bundeswehr has reformed at an impressive speed since its first armed overseas operation in Somalia in 1993, and its officers' learning curve has been very steep in many respects. More than 7,500 troops are currently serving their country abroad. Yet German soldiers have not participated in major ground combat operations since World War II. Therefore, German military leaders have had few opportunities to learn from crises and to adjust their routines and procedures, particularly in public affairs—an activity that is difficult to rehearse in maneuvers.

America's military leaders had to learn the hard way that shutting out the media in Grenada, Panama, and during the first Persian Gulf War was not beneficial.²²

The U.S. embedded-media program for the 2003 invasion of Iraq was a conceptual turnaround. "Let's tell the factual story—good or bad—before others seed the media with disinformation and distortions as they most certainly will continue to do," said a November 2002 message from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to all combatant commands.²³ To enable the U.S. to be the first out with information, the Pentagon delegated release authority for news to the lowest possible level and advised commanders to "approach these decisions with a 'why not' rather than 'why?' [attitude]."²⁴

The German Ministry of Defense has not learned this lesson yet. The ministry is structurally set up to be reactive, not proactive. The ministry's public affairs leaders focus more on the minister's personal image than on the Bundeswehr's. One former public affairs official argues that under the stress of more intense combat operations, with friendly casualties and killed enemy combatants, the ministry might snap back into a restrictive information policy.²⁵ Defense correspondents share this view.

A widespread misunderstanding compounds the problem. The embedded-media program, which most journalists and officers in the United States regard as a successful undertaking, has a rather bad name in Europe. Many German officials, civilian and military, assume that the United States does not allow embedded reporters to report freely and that restrictions on them go well beyond mere operational security. Such embedding, some argue, is not compatible with article 5 of Germany's Basic Law, which prohibits censorship.²⁶ Another argument says that the Bundeswehr's public affairs policy is so good that the press has no interest in being embedded. While the German army's current press policy is indeed good, and some journalists do go on patrol with units, this state of affairs might not be crisis-proof.

Finally, the policy's positive side aspects should not be ignored. The U.S. debate on security and defense policy has benefited tremendously from books and articles by formerly embedded journalists such as Michael Gordon (*Cobra II*), Thomas Ricks (*Fiasco*), Rick Atkinson (*In the Company of Soldiers*), and Mark Bowden (*Blackhawk Down*). The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—no matter how badly they were initially executed politically and militarily—have educated the press corps in military matters, with the result that the Fourth Estate's views

are taken very seriously today. *Fiasco*, for example, probably has received more attention in military circles than most doctrinal documents have.

Even so, instead of seeing the embedded-media program's positive effects, the German press largely views it as a shrewd form of propaganda and censorship. For many European journalists, being embedded with military units means losing impartiality and becoming co-opted. This attitude is akin to that of a soccer reporter who refuses to comment on a soccer game because he neither understands the rules of the game nor approves of soccer. However, the few German journalists who have been embedded have a more nuanced view: they know the military better than their colleagues do, and hence write and speak about military affairs in a more knowledgeable way. Embedding more foreign reporters with units engaged in major operations may have a beneficial side effect on national debates in third countries in the long-term.

By contrast, with respect to the new media, there are significant similarities between the United States and Europe. MyVideo.de, launched in April 2006, was number 17 on Germany's most popular sites only one year later, and viewing is on a sharp upward trajectory: its reach has increased by 46 percent in the past three months.²⁷ The popularity of dailymotion.com, the most popular French video site, increased by 76 percent in the same period.²⁸ Today, YouTube is the world's fourth most visited site, and MySpace is the fifth.²⁹ The abundance of web-capable mobile devices is enhancing this trend.

Many politicians, officers, and experts are concerned about and even alienated by the spread of these new technologies and fear they are losing control of them. Today's senior leaders have not been socialized with the new media. Many discovered email, chat, text messaging, and podcasting for the first time when younger colleagues or their own children showed it to them. They continue to read newspapers in hard copy as their main source of information. The generals who don't understand Web 2.0 are what Marc Prensky of games2train calls "digital immigrants."³⁰ Many of today's majors, captains, and lieutenants, however, and surely the enlisted ranks, are "digital natives." For them, it is normal to have MySpace profiles, chat online, subscribe to podcasts, read blogs, and post their comments and even videos online.

Handling New Tools

Islamic militants, jihadis, and insurgents are usually rather young and well acquainted with the new media. Some insurgents in Iraq use local telephone service providers to send out mass messages using the Short Message Service. Sunni militant groups work the Internet with sophistication. Today, the web is the "primary repository of the essential resources for sustaining the culture of terrorism," says Michael Doran, the new U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Diplomacy. On 3 May 2007, in a briefing to the Senate Committee On Homeland Security, Doran said that Al-Qaeda employs the Internet as an "operational tool" for a variety of organizational purposes, such as recruitment, fundraising, training, instruction, operational planning, and as a "virtual extremist madrassa."³¹

We should learn from the militant extremists' manipulation of the new media. Clearly, the latter are more than just tools for external communication, even though the most sophisticated armies too often still regard them as such. As they use the web, cell phones, and other new technology, insurgent groups have displayed characteristics that Western armies and government agencies should also develop: language skills, cultural and religious empathy, pragmatism, technological dexterity, and networked organizations.

What does this mean in practice? First, we can use the new technology internally to make our operations more efficient. Gerhard Brandstetter, a former commander of the German PRT in Kunduz, believes that mobile phones and digital cameras are essential tools in reconstruction work. Say money from funding agencies is needed to rebuild a school or to get modern equipment for a hospital. Digital photographs, instantly developed and shot around the country in seconds, can help involved organizations prioritize tasks, prepare technically for the job, and get the resources to do the job. According to Brandstetter, prohibiting the use of digital cameras, cell phones, and similar devices is "entirely illusory, and would not serve the purpose."³²

Other new-media enablers are communities-of-practice. The most prominent one, CompanyCommand.com, has become part of the U.S. Army's infrastructure. So has PlatoonLeader.org, a kind of military version of MySpace wherein U.S. Army troops exchange information about their work.³³ The Marine Corps and

the Air Force then tried to emulate the Army's successful initiative. In 2006, the U.S. intelligence community built its own community-of-practice, Intellipedia, based on Wikipedia's software. Intellipedia is a community-networking site designed to share information across security agency boundaries.³⁴

Armies can also use the new media environment externally to meet new demands. For example, we should make use of blogs written by a growing number of active-duty soldiers (milbloggers). In times of scarce journalistic coverage, mainly due to the poor security situation in Iraq, modern armies should welcome milblogs as an additional—and credible as well as candid—perspective on their work. Multi-National Force—Iraq opened a YouTube channel on 17 March 2007, promising a boots-on-the-ground perspective of Operation Iraqi Freedom.³⁵ Other military units and services started similar channels. It remains to be seen how successful these experiments will be.

Text messaging and using locally preferred Internet sites to reach a local audience in the area of operations are other good possibilities. During the European Union Force's (EUFOR's) military operation in Congo, the EUFOR public affairs officers used mass text-messaging to organize press conferences for local journalists, and they offered support for African journalists trying to acquire cell phones.

Currently, only a very small number of German milblogs exist; the phenomenon is most widespread in the U.S. Army, where a search for the right regulatory policy is on. A 6 April 2005 memorandum from Headquarters, Multi-National Force-Iraq, ordered milbloggers to register their sites with their units. Not all have done this. Regulation 530-1, issued 19 April 2007, went a step further. It requires bloggers to "consult with their immediate supervisor and their OPSEC Officer . . . prior to publishing or posting information in a public forum."³⁶ Not only is this level of control unrealistic, it is, in effect, a step back from the trust-based treatment embedded journalists received. Army Public Affairs subsequently drafted a memo to rectify the overambitious regulation.³⁷

Finally, we must not lose sight of the big picture. The Internet and mobile phones have made it much more difficult to maintain communications monopolies. The Soviet Union had a monopoly on public information and news during the cold war (which

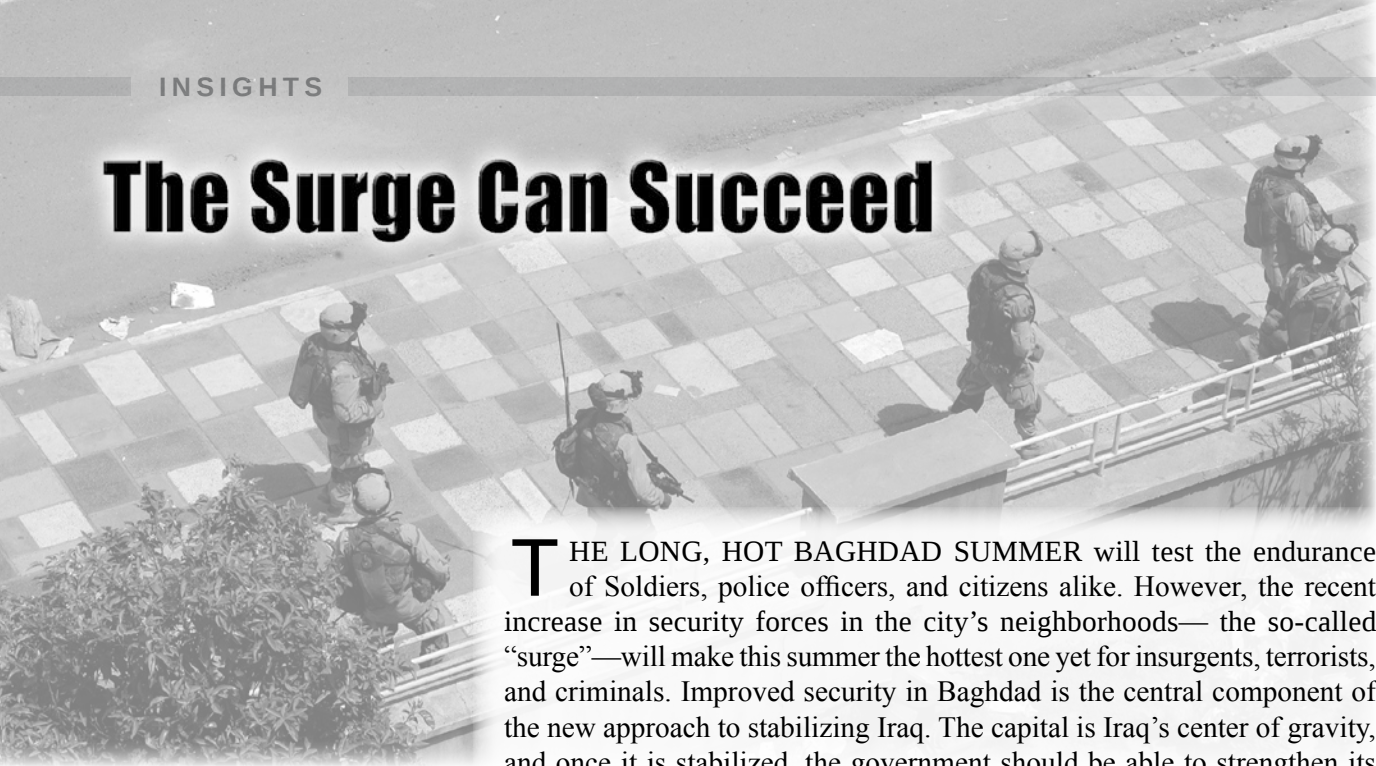
The Internet and mobile phones have made it much more difficult to maintain communications monopolies.

made U.S. public diplomacy a lot easier); and in pre-invasion Iraq, Saddam Hussein had total control of the Iraqi press and thus the information the Iraqi people received. Today, the flow of information to citizens is more difficult to control for the state, and loopholes exist even in authoritarian systems that crack down on Internet activism. Liberal democracies should welcome and support these developments. **MR**

NOTES

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The Surge Can Succeed



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PHOTO: Soldiers from the 2d BCT, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) on a routine patrol in the city of Mosul, Iraq, 24 April 2003. (U.S. Army/SSG William Armstrong)

THE LONG, HOT BAGHDAD SUMMER will test the endurance of Soldiers, police officers, and citizens alike. However, the recent increase in security forces in the city's neighborhoods—the so-called “surge”—will make this summer the hottest one yet for insurgents, terrorists, and criminals. Improved security in Baghdad is the central component of the new approach to stabilizing Iraq. The capital is Iraq's center of gravity, and once it is stabilized, the government should be able to strengthen its control of the country politically and economically.

While few disagree that a more secure Baghdad would yield huge dividends, there has been heated debate about whether or not the surge is the right operational tool to help achieve greater security. We contend that the neighborhood-focused operation currently underway in Baghdad can work. There is no guarantee, of course, but having participated in and analyzed similar operations in three Iraqi cities from 2003 to 2006, we think there are definite grounds for optimism.¹

In our research, we have found that units deployed in Mosul, Samarra, and Ramadi formulated several effective approaches to improving security in those cities. Specifically, when appropriately sized U.S. and Iraqi units operated as combined teams and established themselves inside city neighborhoods, they were able to protect the population and create the necessary conditions for stability. This is the same approach we are currently taking in Baghdad, and if we implement it fully and apply it persistently, we should see some success.

Proper Ratio of Police to People

To maintain security in peaceful countries, the proper ratio of policemen to population is somewhere between 1 and 4 officers per 1,000 citizens, with cities needing higher levels than other areas. (The U.S. has approximately 2.3 police officers per 1,000 residents.) By contrast, analysis of successful 20th-century nation-building and stability operations suggests that a much higher ratio—between 13.26 and 20 troops/policemen per 1,000 civilians—is necessary to establish security in strife-torn countries.² That figure climbs above 20 when the situation involved outside intervention.³ If history is a reliable guide, Baghdad's population of 7 million requires a security force of 140,000. Ideally, Iraqi police units should make up most of the force. However, because of the lethality of criminal and insurgent activities in Baghdad, the Iraqis have required significant military support from the very beginning of the U.S. intervention.

The recent addition to Baghdad of 28,000 U.S. combat Soldiers and extra Iraqi brigades should give commanders the numbers they need to influence all

neighborhoods simultaneously and to hold previously cleared neighborhoods. Until recently, a relative dearth of security forces in the capital (as compared to historic requirements) prevented Iraqi and American troops from holding neighborhoods they had previously cleared of terrorists and insurgents.

Joint Security Stations and Combat Outposts

*If you want to protect the population, you've got to live with it. There's no commuting to the fight.*⁴

—General David H. Petraeus, 8 May 2007

Once you've got enough Soldiers and policemen on the ground, you've got to deploy them among the people if you truly want to protect the people. During 2003, infantry battalions of the reinforced 2d Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, conducted operations from platoon and company combat outposts and patrol bases inside Mosul's neighborhoods to pacify the city and secure its population. Being immersed in their areas of operation (AO) day and night, the 2d BCT Soldiers were able to gain greater local situational awareness and build stronger ties with the population.⁵ As several company commanders explained, the combat outposts and patrol bases enabled Soldiers to patrol among and engage with the population in their AOs. They could respond much more quickly to criminal and insurgent activities because they were already there, and because they knew the ground intimately. Using such tactics, the 2d BCT was able to limit the subversive groups' ability to organize and operate in Mosul.⁶

The Baghdad security plan recognizes the increased effectiveness of Soldiers living among the people 24 hours a day. U.S. and Iraqi forces have established some 60 combat outposts and joint security stations (combined U.S.-Iraqi outposts) in the capital to earn the people's trust. This tactic should facilitate more capable, more responsive security in the garrisoned neighborhoods. The combat outposts will enable coalition forces to maintain a continuous presence, dominate the terrain, make contact with the people, and further expand security influence in the neighborhoods. The joint security stations have not only increased the presence of security forces in neighborhoods, but also improved intelligence sharing and partnership in planning and executing operations across AOs.

In 2003, embedding units in neighborhoods naturally led to more patrolling, a tactic that proved key to gaining and maintaining greater security. Aggressive patrols interacting with the populace were the most effective way to gather information about anti-coalition forces while also protecting the population.

Dismounted patrols were particularly effective. In Ramadi from 2003 to 2004, units walking the ground reported significant gains in intelligence. Soldiers on patrol in local markets and neighborhoods interacted with citizens and built relationships that fostered cooperation, making Iraqis more willing to give information about insurgent activities. Interacting with locals also allowed coalition units to ascertain the people's critical needs, which led to reconstruction projects that helped increase the people's trust in their government.⁷

Working with Local Security Forces

Successful control at the local level is best achieved when coalition and local security forces cooperate as a combined team. In 2003, two U.S. Army battalions worked closely with the local police and civil defense corps units to help a reinforced Army BCT secure Mosul.⁸ Unfortunately, due to the troop reduction in 2004, the U.S. ability to partner with and advise the local security forces in Mosul diminished and the latter's performance began to decline. In November of that year, after the police and some Iraqi National Guard units deserted in the face of insurgent attacks, the city government lost the population's trust and confidence. Some U.S. officers who served in Mosul believe that the Iraqis might have responded differently to the rise in insurgent violence if we had maintained a combined presence in the city. In fact, they thought that the presence of U.S. advisors and additional combat forces would have changed the outcome in 2004.⁹

In Ramadi, where a U.S. infantry battalion trained and advised the city police, the story was essentially the same. Together, the Soldiers and police were effective; when the police had to operate on their own, they failed to resist insurgent activity.¹⁰

While combined operations, as in Baghdad right now, are the way to go, this does not mean that the Iraqi security forces (ISF) are incompetent or cowardly. The real problem has to do with the vulnerability of police forces in Iraq's cities.

Because a community knows or can quickly learn the identity of its police officers and where they live, insurgents can paralyze the ISF by kidnapping or threatening to kill ISF family members. To be effective, the local security effort must be supported either by coalition units or by Iraqi Army units and national police forces whose members have no ties to the locale. Moreover, such support is necessary for years, not months. Forces that come to a city, perform a few raids, and then leave do not solve the local ISF problem.

In 2004 and 2005, the number of trained and equipped Iraqi Army and police battalions and brigades available for security operations increased. In Mosul and Samarra, these forces have since demonstrated that they can contribute effectively to local security.¹¹ Such units will be critical to the neighborhood security effort in Baghdad.

Ultimately, of course, it is the ISF that will have to secure Iraq; therefore, training them is essential to the security mission. In the current operation, three additional ISF brigades are reinforcing the capital. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has established a Baghdad Security Command with ten security framework districts, each with an Iraqi brigade partnered with a U.S. battalion. Throughout Iraq, embedded teams of U.S. trainer-advisors continue to advise ISF units and help improve their operational capabilities. Approximately 6,000 advisors in more than 480 teams are embedded at all levels of Iraq's major subordinate commands. The intent of the U.S. advisory effort is to increase the ISF's professionalism and tactical skills, not make it into a mirror

image of U.S. forces. This move, which allows for a measure of autonomy and acknowledges the ISF's Iraqi identity, is another step in the right direction.

Iraq's security forces are improving steadily at the tactical level. In many cases, ISF units working independently have successfully engaged insurgents. Extrajudicial killings in Iraq have dropped by two-thirds since January 2007, and Iraqi and U.S. forces have received more tips in the past three months than during any such period on record.¹²

Reason for Optimism

For all of the reasons stated above, the comprehensive Baghdad security plan—the surge—can succeed. Protecting the population in Baghdad neighborhoods is a top priority, and it can be achieved by increasing security forces in the city's neighborhoods and conducting aggressive patrols from joint security stations and combat outposts. Deployed en masse in Baghdad, the combined combat power of U.S. and Iraqi security forces can limit the enemy's influence and, by so doing, set the necessary security conditions for political reconciliation and economic progress. Plans with these elements have already worked in Mosul, Samarra, and Ramadi. If we can do the same in the capital, the heart and soul of Iraq, we could significantly weaken the insurgency and set the stage for an Iraqi recovery. **MR**

NOTES

1. Jarett Broemmell, Terry Clark, Shannon Nielsen, "An Analysis of Counterinsurgency in Iraq: Mosul, Ramadi, and Samarra from 2003-2005," <<http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA460435>>.

2. James T. Quinlivan, "Burden of Victory: The Painful Arithmetic of Stability Operations," *RAND Review* (Summer 2003), <www.rand.org/publications/rand-review/issues/summer2003/burden.html>. Quinlivan argues that a ratio of 20 troops per 1000 inhabitants is needed for successful nation-building activities. In establishing this number, he used U.S. experiences in Panama, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan as examples. In another study titled "Boots on the Ground: Troop Density in Contingency Operations," John J. McGrath espouses a 13.26 troops-per-1,000 inhabitants ratio as a more historically accurate guideline. McGrath uses the experiences of the U.S. military in the Philippines, Germany, Japan, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. See <www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/download/csipubs/mcgrath_boots.pdf>.

3. Quinlivan.

4. Ann Scott Tyson, "Troops at Baghdad Outposts Seek Safety in Fortifications," *Washingtonpost.com*, 8 May 2007, <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/05/07/AR2007050701935_pf.html>.

5. Paul Stanton, "Unit Immersion in Mosul: Establishing Stability in Transition," *Military Review* (July-August 2006): 63, 67, 69.

6. Broemmell, Clark, Nielsen.

7. Ibid.

8. The 2d Brigade Combat Team was enhanced by the attachment of the 503d Military Police Battalion. The 503d collaborated with local police to create a proactive neighborhood police capability able to protect the population.

9. Claim based on interviews with officers who served in Mosul in 2004 and reports by advisors who worked with local security forces.

10. Thomas Neemeyer, interview, 2 December 2005. [Digital recording by Operational Leadership Experiences Project, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, KS, in possession of Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, KS].

11. Broemmell, Clark, Nielsen.

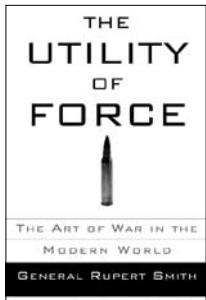
12. "Fact Sheet: Update on the New Iraq Strategy: Helping Iraq's Leaders Secure Their Population," 20 April 2007, <www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/04/20070420-11.html>.



U.S. Air Force/Staff Sgt. James L. Harper Jr.

An Iraqi Army Soldier conducts security for the Iraqi elections on 15 December 2005, Mosul, Iraq.

MR Book Reviews



Featured Review

THE UTILITY OF FORCE: The Art of War in the Modern World, General Rupert Smith, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 2007, 430 pages, \$45.00.

If British General Rupert Smith is right, the United States and its allies are creating

the wrong forces, arming them with the wrong weapons, and using them in the wrong way. In *The Utility of Force*, Smith, who retired from the British Army in 2002, argues that war as we know it—the armed confrontation between two or more nation states—has become extinct.

In its place, we now engage in wars among the people, frustrating and seemingly interminable confrontations, conflicts, and combat actions in which weak, poorly armed adversaries exploit publicity, fear, and their stronger opponents' penchant for overwhelming force in order to gain sympathy, legitimacy, and power. The difficulties of current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan overshadow Smith's ideas, but Smith catalogues a host of such "asymmetric" conflicts, from Spain to Chechnya, to expose the not-so-new realities confronting us.

Smith's thesis is an old one. Since the end of the cold war, Martin van Creveld, Ralph Peters, and other scholars and defense experts have written extensively on the rise of non-state actors, and this discourse has influenced the U.S. Army and Marine Corps' new FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, which specifically addresses the challenges of asymmetric warfare. Blogger John Robb's recently published *Brave New War: The Next Stage of Terrorism and the End of Globalization* (Wiley, Hoboken, NJ, 2007) paints a particularly grim picture of crumbling nation-states incapable of responding quickly and effectively to the decentralized and

rapidly evolving tactics of various criminal and terrorist networks.

Smith's arguments have arrived late to this conversation, but they merit serious attention for several reasons. First, Smith's personal credibility demands respect. Smith has served in the British Ministry of Defense and had extensive command and staff experience in Rhodesia, Iraq (Desert Storm), Bosnia, Kosovo, and Northern Ireland. Just as important, Smith presents his arguments patiently and dispassionately, avoiding the hastily drawn conclusions and breathless fatalism that characterize too much popular military commentary.

Smith also resists the urge to reduce his book to an autobiography. He rarely invokes his own experience to make a point. However, when he does, as in his discussion of UN peacekeeping efforts in Bosnia, he convincingly portrays the repeated, systemic failure of UN diplomats and his own British ministers to appreciate the political and military realities that led to the 1995 massacres at Grozny and Srebrenica.

More often, Smith effectively grounds his larger arguments within the context of Western military history. He begins his analysis by crediting the birth of "industrial" warfare to the *levee en masse*, noting that Napoleon successfully combined political idealism and massive conscription to rapidly overwhelm his rivals on the Continent. From Napoleon, Smith briskly summarizes Clausewitz's concept of the triangular relationship between the state, the military, and the people, and employs this concept as a prism through which he illustrates the technological, strategic, and geopolitical developments of the 19th century that led to the slaughter of the western front. Smith concludes with a persuasive argument that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki bypassed both the state

and the military, constituting the ultimate form of warfare against the people. The catastrophic implications of nuclear weapons rendered such warfare unthinkable, just as it made the massive formations that characterized it obsolete.

Smith then examines the parallel developments of confrontation and conflict that marked the history of the cold war, noting that many of the period's conflicts, including Korea, Cyprus, and the Falklands, remain unresolved to this day. Interestingly, he credits NATO's strategy of combining a credible nuclear deterrent with relatively hollow forces as a significant economic factor in the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, which maintained overwhelming conventional capabilities, including 200 armor and infantry divisions, to the very end. Smith argues that intervention in Afghanistan cost the Kremlin the support of the Russian people and permanently disrupted the balance of the USSR's Clausewitzian triad. He also dismisses the Weinberger principles, which prescribed a series of preconditions for the commitment of U.S. forces. According to Smith, modern confrontations are and will be unpredictable, and it is unlikely that Weinberger's conditions would ever be met.

Smith saves the best for last, identifying six trends that now characterize war among the people:

- The ends for which we fight are changing.
- We fight among the people, rather than on discrete battlefields.
- Our conflicts now resist quick resolution.
- We fight to preserve the force.
- We routinely find new uses for old weapons and organizations.
- War between alliances or coalitions and non-state actors has largely replaced interstate confrontations.

Again, none of these ideas are new, but Smith's well-reasoned arguments lend them considerable

urgency, particularly when one considers how America formulates and spends its annual defense budget. He observes, for example, that the most effective weapon of the past 15 years has been the machete, which was used to kill nearly a million Rwandans in 1994.

Still, Smith believes in both the future of the nation-state and the importance of military power. He predicts, however, that industrial war as a single, massive culminating event will be replaced by “a series of events which may serve to deliver the desired political outcome.” To gain this outcome, Smith urges national (and multinational) leaders to widen their horizons, better appreciate and anticipate the inevitable connections between military and political action, and to tailor the various elements of national power, including diplomatic, humanitarian, economic, military, and intelligence agencies, to cope with the new paradigm.

The Utility of Force is a disturbing and important examination of how and why we fight, and it makes a significant contribution to the national discussion about our future security strategy. Its arguments deserve the attention of American strategists, scholars, Soldiers, and taxpayers.

**LTC Bill Latham, USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGIES: Successes and Failures of Six Nations, Yonah Alexander, ed., Potomac Books, Dulles, VA, 2006, 216 pages, \$48.00.

Yonah Alexander has compiled a series of essays into a book, *Counterterrorism Strategies: Successes and Failures of Six Nations*, for use by those charged with determining counterterrorism strategy. Unfortunately, while Alexander’s contributors sport impressive résumés full of experience and scholarship on the subject of terrorism, the book falls short of Alexander’s objectives.

In his introduction, Alexander defines terrorism, describes his research guidance, and frames four questions he wants answered: What are the governmental and public per-

ceptions of the terrorist threat? How successful have the government’s policies and actions been in combating domestic and international terrorism? What factors have influenced the government’s willingness and ability to cooperate with other nations in combating terrorism? How well have particular countries performed in counterterrorism?

Alexander himself distills the U.S. experience since 1970 to this: combating terrorism shifted from reactive law enforcement to application of all instruments of national power proactively. Paraphrasing his words, the U.S. strategy to combat terrorism is to defeat terrorist organizations, deny them sponsorship, diminish the conditions leading to terrorism, and defend the United States.

The only other essayist to address the subject of terrorism so completely is Dr. Ulrich Schneckener, who details how Germany is organized to combat terrorism and why. He concludes with a frank discussion of strengths, shortcomings, and open policy questions to be resolved. Judging from Schneckener’s contribution here, we in the United States can learn from Germany’s experience in dealing with transnational terrorism.

The rest of the contributors fall short of the standard set by Alexander and Schneckener. France’s contribution boils down to “terrorism is a criminal act, not an act of war.” The French combat terrorism by employing specialized police and judicial organizations. Operations are coordinated at the ministerial and national level, but the police and magistrate functions for counterterrorism are centralized, with the Ministry of the Interior taking the lead for policy and strategy. The author merely describes France’s organizational and bureaucratic approach to counterterrorism; he does not adequately answer Alexander’s four questions.

In the remaining essays we find a legal discussion from the Egyptian contributor, who is an international-law professor; a history of negotiations, conferences, and talks by a former Sri Lankan ambassador who directs his country’s diplomatic training institute; and a description

of Italy’s legalistic and law-enforcement approach to counterterrorism by two writers who discuss a strategy built on plea bargaining, the freezing of financial assets, infiltration of groups, changes to criminal law, and increases in internal security.

Alexander summarizes the experiences of his contributing nations in order to offer “selected examples of what worked and did not work for the purpose of considering a ‘best practices’ framework.” Because his primary questions are for the most part poorly answered, he does not achieve his intent, and I cannot recommend this book to the readers of *Military Review*.

**LTC Stephen V. Tennant,
USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

INSURGENCY AND COUNTER-INSURGENCY IN IRAQ, Ahmed S. Hashim, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY, 2006, 389 pages, \$29.95.

Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq is a candid, balanced insight into the complex challenges in Iraq from 2003 to 2005. Discussing motives, tactics, and the evolutionary nature of the insurgency, author Ahmed Hashim is adroit at drawing intricate strands into an understandable whole. Complementary chapters address the insurgents’ way of warfare and the challenges of competing national identities. However, it is Hashim’s matter-of-fact evaluation of U.S. counterinsurgency that many will find enlightening and on occasion disconcerting.

Hashim’s thesis in a section titled “Ideology, Politics, and Failure to Execute” is that U.S. policy and the U.S. counterinsurgency campaign have played a central role in the outbreak and perpetuation of the insurgency. The author deftly articulates three reasons why the U.S. stumbled so badly: it adopted a rigid and inflexibly ideological approach; it failed to implement the basics of state rebuilding in the immediate aftermath of war; and its military had no counterinsurgency strategy going into the war. Such criticism will undoubtedly ruffle some feathers, but Hashim’s

arguments are cogent and balanced. They deserve to be aired.

Hashim draws on history to improve our understanding of today's challenges. He highlights the fact that it was the British in 1921 who institutionalized Sunni political domination in Iraq, and, in a comparison of the U.S. counterinsurgency in Iraq to the British effort in Malaya (1948-1960), he argues that neoconservatives who point to Malaya as a model for success in Iraq fail to understand obvious differences between the two insurgencies; consequently, their analysis is misleading and their prescription erroneous.

Hashim concludes that the Iraqi insurgency has been motivated at least in part by concerns about national identity: "Put simply, often states and people act not only to win things or to prevent the loss of things, 'but also in order to defend a certain conception of who they are.'" According to Hashim, such bone-deep motivation, coupled with a growing gap between U.S. pragmatists and ideologues in the policy arena, makes the "managed partition" of Iraq seem like the only possible solution.

Like so many accounts written while events are still unfolding, *Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq* must wait on the future before it can be judged a tour de force. In the short term, however, Hashim's work enlightens the current debate on Iraq by providing a measured, carefully researched, and nuanced explanation of events up to 2005. For those deploying to Iraq, the book is necessary professional reading. Civilians wishing to gain a greater understanding of the Iraqi conundrum will appreciate the work, too.

MAJ Andrew M. Roe, British Army, Bulford, United Kingdom

MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS FOR HOMELAND DEFENSE AND SMALLER-SCALE CONTINGENCIES: A Comparative Approach, Kevin D. Stringer, Praeger Security International, Westport, CT, 2006, 222 pages, \$49.95.

Based on recent threats to the U.S. homeland and global threats to U.S.

interests, there seems to be a surge in missions involving homeland defense and expeditionary operations, all of which fall under the umbrella of "operations other than war." It is often said that the military must prepare for future threats in terms of training, doctrine, and force structure, and our Army has always adapted, albeit mostly reactively, to changes in the threat environment.

In *Military Organizations for Homeland Defense and Smaller-Scale Contingencies*, Kevin D. Stringer provides a proactive solution to the new security requirements by suggesting that the U.S. Army should focus on developing specific kinds of brigade-size units, not general types, to conduct stability operations. Toward that end, Stringer combines Colonel (Retired) Douglas MacGregor's concept of joint task forces/brigades and Lieutenant Colonel Richard D. Hooker's proposal of educating leaders in accordance with career tracks and unit missions. Stringer's "specialty brigades" would be assigned key stability missions such as domestic authority support, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, counter-drug operations, arms control, noncombatant evacuation, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, show of force, counterinsurgency support, and even the more traditional attacks and raids.

To arrive at his optimum brigade model for stability operations, Stringer compares units from nine countries (Sweden, Norway, Israel, Britain, Denmark, Germany, Rhodesia, Soviet Union, and Colombia). This is where his analysis seems strongest.

Stringer also calls for a clear delineation of duties between active-duty and Guard/Reserve brigades, with the active concentrating on external threats and the Guard/Reserve focusing on domestic ones. Although somewhat controversial, this proposal falls at least partly in line with recommendations by the Hart-Rudman Commission and the Gilmore Panel, both of which urged that the National Guard be assigned homeland security as a primary mission.

On the debit side, Stringer does not fully address the issue of trans-

forming while conducting combat operations, nor does he consider the political or financial impacts of restructuring and retraining. However, placed against the book's fresh and innovative recommendations, these shortcomings seem more like quibbles than qualms. Ultimately, and most important, Stringer erects a strong foundation for future decisions about how we should transform our Army to face domestic emergencies and emerging threats. His book could become the benchmark for future publications addressing these issues.

MAJ John M. Hinck, USA, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

RUMSFELD: His Rise, Fall, and Catastrophic Legacy, Andrew Cockburn, Scribner Press, New York, 2007, 247 pages, \$25.00.

On the heels of Bob Woodward's *State of Denial: Bush at War, Part III* (Simon & Schuster, New York, 2006), Michael Isikoff and David Corn's *Hubris: The Inside Story of Spin, Scandal, and the Selling of the Iraq War: How American Incompetence Created a War Without End* (Three Rivers Press, New York, 2007), and Peter W. Galbraith's *The End of Iraq* (Simon & Schuster, New York, 2007), Andrew Cockburn offers readers what is undoubtedly the harshest critique of the former Secretary of Defense to date. With *Rumsfeld: His Rise, Fall, and Catastrophic Legacy*, Cockburn uses the literary equivalent of a broadsword to explore his subject, striking deeply and often at Rumsfeld as a politician, a business leader, a Washington insider, and a defense secretary. The resulting blunt-force trauma is at times informative, but ultimately exhausting.

Cockburn introduces Rumsfeld as a young congressional hopeful from Chicago, noting his early tendency to leave dissatisfaction in his wake. He follows Rumsfeld through his steady rise within the administrations of presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald Ford, detailing his orchestration of the "Halloween massacre" of 31 October 1975, the political

coup de grace that thrust him into the Defense Department at 43, the youngest man to serve as secretary. Cockburn then explores Rumsfeld's ventures into the business world, first in pharmaceuticals with G.D. Seale (where he successfully lobbied for FDA approval of the artificial sweetener aspartame, a suspected carcinogen), then later in technology with General Instrument Corporation and in construction with the Swiss company ABB (where, as a member of the board of directors, he approved the sale of light-water nuclear reactors to North Korea in 1991).

When Cockburn returns with Rumsfeld to the Defense Department in 2001, readers may begin to wonder if the secretary himself is a member of President George W. Bush's infamous "Axis of Evil." While the facts surrounding Rumsfeld's ascendance to political influence may not be in question, Cockburn's subjective approach to the former secretary is eventually wearying. Aside from a short, albeit informative, analysis of his subject's personality early in the book, Cockburn swings his literary broadsword with anything but surgical precision, hacking away at Rumsfeld with an approach more befitting Attila. Although other authors have already addressed many of Cockburn's conclusions concerning the former secretary, the portrait painted here borders on cancerous.

Cockburn is a well-respected writer and journalist, having published five nonfiction books, including the prescient *The Threat: Inside the Soviet Military Machine* (Random House, New York, 1983), which revealed the dire state of the Warsaw Pact military capability at the height of the cold war. Some readers will find in *Rumsfeld* a firm validation of their own personal opinions, but those in search of an unbiased examination of the life of the man may want to read elsewhere. Nevertheless, despite its seemingly barbaric approach, *Rumsfeld* is well-written, captivating, and thoroughly entertaining.

**LTC Steve Leonard, USA,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

TRANSFORMING EUROPEAN MILITARIES: Coalition Operations and the Technology Gap, Gordon Adams and Guy Ben-Ari, Routledge: Taylor and Francis Group, London and New York, 2006, 176 pages, \$120.00.

In *Transforming European Militaries*, Gordon Adams and Guy Ben-Ari argue comprehensively and compellingly that NATO's greatest capability challenge going forward is to create a networked, interoperable C4ISR architecture. The authors outline, in great detail, all the major C4ISR initiatives going on among NATO nations that have been significant capability providers for NATO-led operations, and in Sweden, a leading Partnership for Peace nation.

What becomes strikingly clear is that NATO faces a number of challenges to building a C4ISR capability that will satisfy its ambitious requirements. Many of the programs and initiatives are being developed disjointedly and, in many cases, in competition with each other. Furthermore, competing national defense priorities among NATO members, shrinking defense budgets, and restrictive dual-purpose usage requirements, technology transfer regulations, and interoperability concerns are complicating the challenge of synchronizing and synergizing collaborative research, technology investments, and capability and systems procurement.

Making matters even more difficult is the emerging competition between an expanding European Union (EU) and its strategic military ambitions relative to EU NATO members and U.S. defense ambitions and priorities. Having served with NATO's Allied Command for Transformation, where I developed capability requirements through NATO's Defense Requirements Review and endured the challenges of getting nations to commit to capability development/requirements via force goals, I have a special appreciation for the authors' comprehensive, well-articulated assessment of the problems inherent in developing interoperable C4ISR

capabilities within NATO. Adams and Ben-Ari clearly demonstrate their understanding of these challenges and propose viable ways to meet them successfully.

Transforming European Militaries contains a wealth of knowledge for those interested in what the most prominent countries in the most capable and respected military alliance extant are doing in the realm of C4ISR. It also gives valuable insight into member-nation national defense strategies, philosophies, and priorities, as well as approaches each nation takes to meeting its national objectives while working toward collective EU and NATO objectives. The book is particularly valuable to those working at the strategic or joint/combined operational levels of military planning, especially those involved with C4ISR functions or operational planning within NATO.

**LTC David A. Anderson,
USMC, Retired, Ph.D.,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

WHAT WAS ASKED OF US: An Oral History of the Iraq War by the Soldiers Who Fought It, Trish Wood, Little, Brown and Company, Hachette Book Group, NY, 2006, 309 pages, \$25.99.

Trish Wood, a Canadian reporter working with Iraqi war veterans, asserts that the media, the military, the White House, and political biases are filtering the facts about the war. According to Wood, we really know very little about the experiences of front-line American Soldiers. Wood's publisher boasts that her book, *What Was Asked of Us: An Oral History of the Iraq War by the Soldiers Who Fought It*, is an unvarnished, unfiltered, uncensored history of the Iraq war straight from the mouths of the men and women who are fighting it. Although roughly one million Soldiers have deployed to Iraq, the author interviewed only 29, thus providing a very narrow and limited perspective. Moreover, Wood doesn't give us the actual transcripts of her interviews; she takes the Soldiers' heartfelt experiences and presents them as stories.

The evidence presented is therefore anecdotal in nature and filtered through Wood, two facts that ought to make us question the objectivity of Wood's findings.

From the first suicide bombing of Operation Iraqi Freedom to the anti-climactic Iraqi elections, Wood's biases become apparent. Her book's true value rests in the common experiences shared by the interviewees. Stories appropriately titled "I didn't pray for the Iraqis" to "We just killed a bunch of dudes who were on our side" will appeal to most veterans. They also speak volumes about the horrors of combat and the origins of post traumatic stress. Gory and traumatic, the book focuses an inordinate amount of attention on mortuary affairs, with one officer contributing five such stories. Another interviewee describes his combat experience as "gruesome to just beyond the realm of a horror film."

It is not this reviewer's intention to dismiss *What Was Asked of Us*; although it has problems, Wood's book also has merit. Field Manual 3-90, *Tactics*, states that "understanding the human dimension—the effects of combat on Soldiers," is part of the art of tactics. Stories like the ones presented here can help us understand the magnitude of combat effects. At the same time, reading them may help our combat veterans achieve catharsis.

**LTC Michele Miller, USA, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

ARMY 101: Inside ROTC in a Time of War, David Axe, University of South Carolina Press, Columbia, 2007, 111 pages, \$24.95.

Recently, a Medal of Honor recipient whose acquaintance I made reminded me that, 40 years ago, the American public could not separate people in uniform from the decisions made by their civilian elected leader, and as a result they made Soldiers in uniform a target. Many who made that error are now ashamed of it. Reading *Army 101: Inside ROTC in a Time of War* reminded me of that error.

In *Army 101*, author David Axe describes the experiences of several cadets enrolled in the Army ROTC program at the University of South Carolina. Axe hinges his narrative on events before and after 9/11 and organizes his book in two distinct sections of eight short chapters, implying both national and local shifts in attitude about the War on Terror and its effect on those wearing the nation's uniform. The opening vignette describes ROTC cadets waiting in ambush during a training exercise. Axe perfectly captures that moment by focusing on the experiences of the cadet squad leader in charge.

Unfortunately, the book struggles after that first success. The next-to-last chapter takes the reader to Iraq for five pages to describe the experiences of a few officers who were commissioned via ROTC. The connection appears to be that the officers are from South Carolina and either served in the South Carolina National Guard or were commissioned from an ROTC program in South Carolina. But none of them were part of the ROTC program at South Carolina during the time span of this book. The chapter mainly serves as a platform to condemn, for the last of many times, American intervention in Iraq. (I should also note that the chapter has another possible *raison d'être*: it features a picture of Axe in a helicopter riding into Iraq.)

Axe's limited omniscient point of view veers off in a prose style that depends largely on polarizing hyperbole to hold the reader's attention. More damaging, it divorces the narrator from the limits of fact or reasonable logic. For example, just because a noncommissioned officer at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, wears the patch of the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment on his right shoulder, he must have "massacred Iraqi soldiers in the Kuwaiti desert." The book is filled with similar sensational yet nonsensical claims.

The reader might conclude that Axe adopts this hyperbolic style to emphasize the gravity of the situation he describes. That may be, but his tone is too smug to bring dignity to that gravity. Moreover, his book is

replete with niggling errors of fact, as he repeatedly mislabels or misidentifies military units, programs, and practices. Axe confuses the uniformed chiefs of the armed services with the civilian service secretaries. He insists that the Army executes "forced enlistments," a clear misinterpretation of the terms of a cadet's enlistment contract. He claims that an ROTC cadet technically outranks a noncommissioned officer. He describes the U.S. Military Academy at West Point as "the official college of the U.S. Army," as if the Army assigned corporate sponsorship to the Academy. Little by little, Axe spends the currency he earned with his readers in Chapter 1.

Clichéd diction abounds, much of it issuing from Axe's post-Vietnam-era sensibility, and cadet perceptions are reported as facts, a logical fallacy that stems from Axe's obvious empathy with his subjects. Thus the dialogue is replete with F-bombs, the training events are clarified with allusions to Jean-Claude Van Damme movies, and the central thesis is a recurring conclusion: the chain of command, from the senior cadets learning to lead their peers to the noncommissioned officers running the rappel tower to the president of the United States of America, is all screwed up. If we believe Axe, the Abu Ghraib prison scandal symbolizes this thesis. In fact, if Abu Ghraib had never happened, this book would be 20 or 30 pages shorter. That makes all the more reason to lament those crimes.

**LTC Robert Gibson, USA,
Retired, U.S. Military Academy,
New York**

HISTORY OF THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE: Volume 5, The McNamara Ascendancy, 1961-1965, Lawrence S. Kaplan, Ronald D. Landa, and Edward J. Drea, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Washington, DC, 2006, 664 pages, \$49.00.

Writing the history of a large government institution is always a challenging task, but the challenge is increased when the head of the

institution is a controversial figure whose dramatic actions are difficult to assess outside the organizational context in which they occurred. Seen in this light, *The McNamara Ascendancy*, the official history of the Office of the Secretary of Defense during the first four years of Robert S. McNamara's tenure, is a remarkable achievement.

The authors begin with a mundane but necessary discussion of McNamara's organizational changes, to include the creation of various joint organizations (Defense Intelligence Agency, Defense Logistics Agency, et al.) and the implementation of the Planning-Programming-Budgeting System, McNamara's attempt to eliminate duplication between the military services by budgeting along functional lines—general war offensive forces, general purpose forces, sealift, and airlift forces, etc. Inevitably, these changes produced conflict between a defense secretary with strongly held ideas and the military and congressional leaders whose opinions he disregarded. This portion of the study almost demands that the reader draw comparisons to Donald Rumsfeld's second stint as secretary of defense. The authors conclude that although these clashes cost McNamara politically, he (like Rumsfeld for more than five years) was able to prevail because of strong presidential support and his own enormous pragmatism and ability.

Thereafter, the bulk of the book focuses on McNamara's role in the issues of the day, including the Berlin Wall and attendant partial mobilization, the two crises over Cuba, the continuing issue of Laotian neutrality, and the inexorable U.S. slide toward involvement in Vietnam. Again, the historical parallels to Rumsfeld are unavoidable, as McNamara remained confident that the Vietnamese Communists would be defeated even as he tried (although vainly) to minimize and reduce U.S. troop commitments in the war zone.

This is a remarkably lucid book that contains much of value about civil-military relations and institutional change in a time of great military stress. Despite its neces-

sary bulk, it is highly readable and deserves the attention of all professional Soldiers and politicians.

**COL Jonathan M. House,
USAR, Retired,
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

THE TET OFFENSIVE: A Concise History, James H. Willbanks, Columbia University Press, New York, 2006, \$29.50.

In this short, well-written, and helpful reference, James Willbanks traces the origins, conduct, and aftermath of the Communist Tet Offensive in 1968, during the Vietnam War. He highlights conflicting interpretations of the campaign's success and significance at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. Willbanks includes a brief chronology of major Tet-related events from January 1967 to December 1968; a pithy encyclopedia of Tet-related vocabulary; reproductions of 10 important primary documents; and a reference guide to primary sources, significant secondary works, archival collections, and other resources concerning the Vietnam War in 1968.

Within his narrative, Willbanks ably encapsulates the campaign's most salient features for those unfamiliar with Tet 1968 in particular, and the Vietnam War in general. However, his treatment of the continuing historiographical debate over Tet betrays a vein of institutional bias that runs throughout the work. Given his position as a military historian on the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College faculty, it is not surprising that Willbanks effectively condemns what he deems slanted and overzealous American media coverage for translating a major tactical defeat of Communist forces into ultimate strategic victory for North Vietnam. It must be noted, though, that Willbanks does devote relatively extensive and favorable text to *Washington Post* reporter Peter Braestrup's work.

Elsewhere, Willbanks glosses over the genesis and moment of fundamental reappraisals by Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford

and the "Wise Men," President Lyndon Johnson's nine-man panel of retired presidential advisors. He also affords precious bibliographic text to a chapter by Victor Davis Hanson in an otherwise tight selection of important secondary works. Perhaps the text devoted to the Hanson entry could instead have been used to acknowledge Record Group 472 of the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, as one of the premier archival sources for scholars researching the Vietnam War.

Despite these minor and understandable shortcomings, Willbanks has succeeded admirably in his stated mission "to provide information and resources for further study of the 1968 Tet Offensive." As a primer, his work will launch many undergraduate and graduate students well forward on their paths to scholarly success. *The Tet Offensive* is enjoyable reading and an important new addition to the large body of scholarship concerning the Vietnam War.

**MAJ John M. Hawkins,
West Point, New York**

HITLER'S SOLDIER IN THE U.S. ARMY: An Unlikely Memoir of WW II, Werner H. Von Rosenstiel, The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 2006, 294 pages, \$22.50.

Memoirs provide much of the grist we have for understanding the grand events of history. Not surprisingly, memoirs are among the oldest forms of historical writing and range from Caesar's *Commentaries* to Sam Watkins' *Company Aych: A Confederate Memoir of the Civil War* (Touchstone, New York, 2003) to today's blog entries written by Soldiers deployed to Kabul and Baghdad. We are nearing the end of new memoirs of World War II, so Werner Von Rosenstiel's *Hitler's Soldier in the U.S. Army* is a welcome, even wonderful, addition to the stories the "greatest generation" is seeking to tell before it is too late. Von Rosenstiel writes clearly and with wit and appreciation about how ironic his personal experience was.

Von Rosenstiel's story is, as he asserts, unlikely. The son of a petty Prussian nobleman-cum-bureaucrat, the author studied law and was admitted to the bar in Germany, met the deposed Kaiser, and cheered the news of Hitler's rise to power. While working to pay his way, he studied political science and traveled in the United States and the Pacific from 1935 to 1937. He arrived home in January 1937, where he received notice for military service. Now disillusioned by what he saw in Germany, Von Rosenstiel applied for 30 days' leave in the United States, ostensibly to improve his English prior to assuming a post in the German judicial administration.

Von Rosenstiel returned to the United States in April 1939. He married an American girl he met when studying at the University of Cincinnati, and they moved to Detroit, Michigan, in August 1939, where he worked for a German pharmaceutical company. Things became surreal for Von Rosenstiel after 7 December 1941. First the U.S. identified him as an enemy alien and then, in March of 1943, he received notice that New York had admitted him to the bar and that he was drafted again—this time by the U.S. Army. After Rosenstiel completed basic training, the Army consigned him to aimless duty in a labor service company while determining whether he could be trusted. Von Rosenstiel's service in the U.S. Foreign Legion proved frustrating. He understood why he was not to be trusted, but he found it difficult to understand why some of his American-born colleagues, who spoke only English and, more important, clearly held "American" views, could be seen as threats.

Army counterintelligence reluctantly and provisionally cleared Von Rosenstiel in the summer of 1943. In August, he became a U.S. citizen. Not long after, he joined the XVIII Airborne Corps, where he served as a legal assistant until he accepted a commission in the Judge Advocate General's Corps. After V-E Day, Von Rosenstiel joined the staff of the Nuremberg tribunal, for which he worked until he departed for home and separated from service in December 1946. Von Rosenstiel's story is well told and is as truly amazing as it is unlikely.

**COL Gregory Fontenot USA,
Retired, Lansing, Kansas**

PORTRAIT OF WAR: The U.S. Army's First Combat Artists and the Doughboys' Experience in WWI, Peter Krass, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, NJ, 2007, 342 pages, \$30.00.

Written in an accessible style, *Portrait of War* is the story of eight U.S. Army Soldier-artists recruited as captains to accompany the combat troops of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) during World War I. Both the French and American high commands gave them passes to allow maximum access to occupied zones, battlefields, and trenches. These men found themselves amid the fiercest combat that American troops participated in, including campaigns in the Marne, Belleau Wood, and Meuse Argonne. By using "their heightened powers of observation, the artists not only recorded but also exposed history as it unfolded."

The pre-war artistic histories of these men are impressive: for

example, Wallace Morgan had an artist's studio for 10 years prior to the war; George Harding was teaching art at the University of Pennsylvania; Harry Townsend had studied under Howard Pyle and been an illustrator for major journals; and Harvey Dunn was an associate of N.C. Wyeth. The only one who had had military training was J. Andre Smith, but the training was minimal. Throughout their wartime experiences, the eight artists successfully fought off pressure to act as propagandists for the U.S. war effort. What they did produce was a curious mix of propaganda and realism. As the war went on, unsettling images began to appear on the artists' tablets. In many drawings and sketches, we see AEF soldiers subsumed into the slaughter fields that were World War I.

Krass's book contains dozens of examples of the artists' works, and those who are familiar with their European counterparts' drawings—such as Max Beckmann's or Luc-Albert Moreau's—will appreciate the Americans' various interpretive styles. Krass also includes a very helpful afterword with biographies of the men. The book is not without superfluous anecdote, but that notwithstanding, this is an outstanding work that fills gaps in our knowledge of how war is perceived and received through artistic interpretation, especially as it relates to the American experience. Krass skillfully weaves the wartime experience of the artists into the campaigns they followed, and reminds us of the vital contributions of American combat artists to our military history.

**MAJ Jeff Alfier,
USAF, Retired,
Ramstein, Germany**

MR Letters

Army IO is PSYOP

Lieutenant Colonel Carmine Cicalese, USA, Assistant Chief of Staff, G7, MultiNational Division—Baghdad(MND-B), Iraq—As an

information operations (IO) officer, I appreciated Colonel Curtis D. Boyd's May-June 2007 *Military Review* article "Army IO is PSYOP—Influencing More with Less."

COL Boyd is correct that IO is often confused with psychological operations (PSYOP) . . . but mainly because we do not understand our own doctrine, recent changes to the

doctrine, or emerging doctrine. . . .

In MND-B, we conduct full-spectrum IO by planning, coordinating, and synchronizing IO, public affairs (PA), civil affairs, and related special programs. We focus on disrupting the enemy's decision-making cycle as it relates to the division commander's high-priority target list. PSYOP is not alone in this effort The division also plans and coordinates the communications line of operation (LOO) The communications LOO informs and influences key audiences through PA, select IO (mostly PSYOP), video images, and Soldier and leader engagements. PSYOP is an important part of shaping the information environment and then exploiting key events . . . however, it is not the only means of exploitation and consequence management. . . .

The greatest growth in information is in the PA arena. By engaging Iraqi and Arab media outlets . . . [w]e do not have to wait for PSYOP's produc-

tion and approval—PA is not limited to domestic audiences whatsoever.

COL Boyd is also correct that more PSYOP personnel are needed. Although the PSYOP personnel work for me, I believe a PSYOP lieutenant colonel at division level would better serve the commander. The PSYOP and PA communities have not reached a common understanding in support of IO or of the importance of a communications approach; as a result, they have defaulted the process to the IO generalist.

COL Boyd's recommendation to develop strategic communications experts from the PA and PSYOP communities is sound. However, we cannot forget the importance of coordinating Soldier and leader engagements at all levels in order to tie the strategic communications message down to the tactical level. Thus, the strategic communications specialist has to be more than just PSYOP or PA. The Army should develop field-grade specialists to

serve at the brigade combat team level and above. This calls for a commitment to increase information personnel.

I concur that we need to reallocate information billets, but with a subtle change, PSYOP and PA personnel can be strategic communications specialists. The IO generalist becomes an IO specialist who coordinates the core capabilities to affect the enemy's cognitive and technical decision-making cycle.

The Army is losing sight of its IO capability because of the current counterinsurgency (COIN) fight. However, the joint-IO approach is still required in COIN and even more so in high-intensity conflicts. As co-author of the original Combined Forces Land Component Command IO plan for the ousting of the regime, I can vouch that the IO plan was much more than PSYOP. If we don't remember the origins of IO, we will retreat to our capabilities circa 1990.



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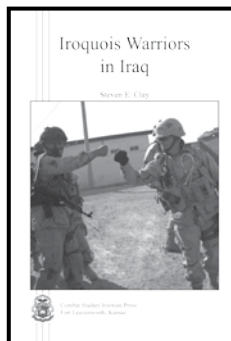
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★ *R E S U L T S* ★

The Combined Arms Center at Fort Leavenworth is pleased to announce the winners of the 2007 General William E. DePuy Writing Competition on the topic of “Stability Operations.” Forty-one manuscripts were received and judged by a distinguished panel of invited experts.

1st Place “S.W.E.T. and Blood—Establishing and Restoring Essential Services as a Battle Between Insurgents and Counterinsurgents During Stability Operations,”
by MAJ Erik A. Claessen, Belgian Army, **\$1000**

2nd Place “Reflecting on Stability Operations,” by MAJ Michael B. Siegl, **\$750**

3rd Place “The New Legs Race: Critical Perspectives on Biometrics in Iraq,”
by Andrew Hom, **\$500**

4th Place “Finding America’s Role in a Collapsed North Korean State,”
by CPT Jonathan Stafford (Australia), **\$250**

Honorable Mention

“A Disregarded Dimension in the War on Terror,” by MAJ Todd A. Schmidt, **\$100**

“Stabilizing Influence: Developing a Micro-Financial Services Capability,”
by James E. Shircliffe Jr, **\$100**

“Preparing for Economics in Stability Operations: The Way Ahead,”
by Dr. David A. Anderson/MAJ Andrew Wallen, *share* **\$100**

Members of the panel who reviewed this year’s contest submissions are:

Lieutenant General Sir John Kiszely, Director, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom
Mr. James Dobbins, Director, RAND Center for International Security and Defense Policy and former Envoy to Afghanistan
Dr. James H. Willbanks, Professor, National Security Affairs, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
Dr. Seth Jones, RAND Center for International Security and Defense Policy
Dr. Nora Bensahel, RAND Center for International Security and Defense Policy
Mr. Gene Del Bianco, U.S. State Department representative to the Command and General Staff College (Political-Military Advisor, U.S. Embassy-Kuwait, 2002-2004)

The winning manuscripts will be published in upcoming editions of *Military Review*, the professional journal of the U.S. Army. Honorable Mentions and distinguished submissions that were not formally recognized will be given preferential consideration for publication subject to space constraints and continuing relevance of topic.