

## Letters . . .

### OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR

**To the Editor**—Ann Story and Aryea Gottlieb argued in their recent article (*JFQ*, Autumn 1995) that doctrine for operations other than war is a hodgepodge of terms that lacks a unifying structure. They propose to reorganize doctrine by distinguishing between combat and noncombat operations. While their distinction is clear and simple, it is inadequate as a review of the military operational framework derived from it suggests.

Under combat operations, the authors list war, retaliatory actions, and operations to restore order. While these categories involve combat, the latter two are fundamentally different from war. Under both military force is subject to a host of political constraints that would not apply in war. The retaliatory strike that is cited, Eldorado Canyon, is a perfect example. Political considerations dictated even the weapons to employ. Similarly, when restoring order it is political considerations that determine every aspect of military operations, even tactics, because small unit actions can have a strategic impact as explicitly noted in Joint Pub 3-07. Such examples suggest why the distinction between combat and noncombat is inadequate to describe the different ways force can be used.

The same inadequacy is apparent in the noncombat part of the operational framework which includes shows of force. While we do not intend to use force in such cases, we must be prepared to use it, and the fact that force is considered implies that an enemy is at hand. This distinguishes these operations (and, one might add, insurgency and counterinsurgency support as well as some counterdrug operations) from other noncombat operations such as disaster relief.

While a distinction between combat and noncombat operations is important, it is inadequate because it does not focus on why military force is being used, which is the decisive question. The warfighting mission is to destroy the ability of an enemy to resist. Military objectives should take precedence over almost every political consideration because unless military objectives are achieved political goals will not be realized. The military also is used in situations where there is no struggle with an enemy but where the special capabilities of the Armed Forces can nevertheless be applied. What Story and Gottlieb have called *support and assistance operations* and *truce-keeping* are in this category. Finally, in cases that fall between warfighting and non-adversarial military operations, force or other appropriate means may be used. Here combat

capabilities are rightly constrained by the requirements of other coercive means as well as a host of political considerations that affect the nature of the military operation.

Regardless of the terminology finally selected for categorizing operations other than war, it is insufficient to make a distinction based on the presence or absence of combat. Instead categories should be delineated by the purpose for which force is used, since purpose determines operational method and, by extension, doctrine. Three categories that should be distinguished are: operations where no adversary is present and thus force is not required, operations where limited force is used as part of a coercive process calculated to alter political relationships, and operations in war where force is used to achieve strategic military objectives by destroying enemy forces and taking terrain. Doctrine based on these distinctions will help to dispel the confusion that the authors rightly note permeates doctrine today.

—BG Thomas E. Swain, USA

Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for  
Special Operations and Low-Intensity  
Conflict (Policy and Missions)

**To the Editor**—As one of the authors of Joint Pub 3-07, *Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*, I want to comment on the article, "Beyond the Range of Military Operations," by Ann Story and Aryea Gottlieb.

Even though the framework contained in Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, and Joint Pub 3-07 may not be the best, Story and Gottlieb have failed to make a convincing argument for replacing it. The 3-0/3-07 framework is not that hard to understand. While *war* is described and not defined in the pubs, most of us have a good notion of what war is. MOOTW is comprised of those things that war is not. Moreover, Joint Pub 3-07 explains that MOOTW includes combat and noncombat situations. So the argument that MOOTW is principally noncombat is invalid.

The framework found in the article is flawed. Most attempts to categorize or group military operations risk oversimplifying them and frequently are wrong. No matter how Story and Gottlieb qualify their framework, it creates added confusion and misunderstanding. A model that rests on describing mission types as either combat or noncombat is patently wrong.

The categories offered by Story and Gottlieb serve no purpose. They do not meet the *why* or *so what* test. If one accepts this grouping as a way to more easily memorize mission types, the result is oversimplification. Seemingly simple operations are complex undertakings and should not be trivialized. Each situation is unique and must be understood as

such. That is why both officers and NCOs are paid more—they must know what to do when a non-textbook challenge arises.

What is more, the grouping suggests that there are absolutes in military operations: combat, noncombat, and others which may be either. While some operations start as combat, others do not but can turn to combat, in which case we must be able to deal with them. The issue here is that the purpose of conducting an operation is not whether it involves combat, use of force, non-violence, or relief. The purpose of each operation is to achieve a specified endstate that supports a political objective.

The grouping advanced does not address mission types that may or may not be defined by combat. In fact, with a few exceptions, an argument can be made that there are mission types that simply do not fit neatly under any category. The article identifies two new types which are termed *operations to restore order* and *retaliatory actions* (vice strikes and raids) and places them on a level with war under the heading of *combat operations*. This categorization ignores the fact that missions such as peace enforcement and enforcing sanctions may involve only a threat of force. Also, strikes and raids may be preemptive, a type of operation for which the article offers no term of art.

Story and Gottlieb place missions that may involve combat under the rubric of *noncombat operations*. One example of this type of operation is the airlift of humanitarian aid to Bosnia, which was termed a humanitarian assistance mission. But the threat from the ground was so high that the aircraft were equipped with defensive systems. This is interesting since similar aircraft flew in two wars without such systems. So even humanitarian assistance may involve combat.

Many controversial aspects of Joint Pub 3-07 have been overcome in recent years, although some remain even after its approval in June 1995. Its most important achievement was to begin to clarify MOOTW. While not perfect, it must be kept intact long enough to examine its framework. But one point is certain: a framework for military operations cannot rely upon a combat/noncombat model. Distinguishing between combat and noncombat will be increasingly difficult in the future. Nonlethal technologies may offer more potent means, a development that will pose challenges for defining a military operations framework in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The Armed Forces are organized, trained, and equipped to conduct a range of operations in times of war or any time that the Nation calls. In this sense all operations are *military operations*.

—Maj Russell S. Hall, USAF  
Army-Air Force Center for  
Low Intensity Conflict

## SOMALIA LESSONS

**To the Editor**—I was interested to read the article by COL Kenneth Allard entitled “Lessons Unlearned: Somalia and Joint Doctrine” in your last issue. However, I was surprised by his statement that “there were three de facto chains of command, namely, the United Nations, U.S. Central Command, and U.S. Special Operations Command.” As commander in chief of U.S. Special Operations Command at the time of TF Ranger operations, I did not have real or de facto operational command of special operations forces (SOF) deployed to Somalia.

Under the Goldwater-Nichols Act, commanders in chief of theater unified commands have combatant command (COCOM) of all forces employed in their areas of operations. This principle of law and joint doctrine held true for operations in Somalia. GEN Joseph P. Hoar, CINCCENT, exercised COCOM of all forces in Somalia, to include those that made up TF Ranger. Specifically, the task force commander reported directly to GEN Hoar and not to me. He also fully coordinated and deconflicted all operations with the commander of U.S. Forces Somalia. It was through this latter relationship that TF Ranger called for the quick reaction force composed of U.S. and U.N. forces on October 3. Moreover, the commander of U.S. Forces Somalia had operational command of all other SOF assigned to his JTF, which included special forces, psychological operations, and civil affairs personnel.

Allard has also published a longer study on which this article is based—*Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned*. Interestingly, that work better defines the command relationships in Somalia by correctly pointing out that the commander of TF Ranger reported “directly back to USCENCOM without going through either U.S. or U.N. channels.”

While there are indeed many lessons learned from our Somalia experience, we must ensure that they—and any conclusions which we draw from them—are based on fact.

—GEN Wayne A. Downing, USA  
Commander in Chief, Special  
Operations Command

## OUR ROLES AND MISSIONS

**To the Editor**—The Armed Forces have reached a critical juncture in their evolution. Although our mission is to fight and win the Nation's wars, we are in danger of doctrinally and rhetorically writing ourselves out of a job. This was apparent in recent foot dragging and quibbling over roles and missions on a range of issues including counternarcotics, counterproliferation, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and nationbuilding. Instead of embracing an expanded view of roles and missions within the broad terms of national interests and security, we seem to be content to hide behind the shield of “mission creep” and a probability of fighting conventional conflicts together with coalition partners against some convenient bogeymen.

The traditional threats to what is broadly referred to as national security are not so much changing as our response to them is undergoing a transformation. On the Korean peninsula, a future conflict probably will be a come-as-you-are affair. Lacking concrete attack indicators, it is likely that we will fight and win with South Korean and American forces that are available rather than having the luxury of a long build-up period.

On the Arabian peninsula, a build-up in the face of a credible threat is more probable, but again the outcome will be a foregone conclusion provided we have the necessary political and moral will. However, analysts such as Lawrence Korb have even discounted the probability of fighting a two-front war under current conditions.

Against the background of vacuum—albeit well defined—threats comes the risk of further cuts in the defense budget. Since the political and economic fallout of eliminating high dollar (and industrially important) weapons systems is enormous, it is clear that cuts can and must occur in the force structure. The argument will be advanced, absent overseas missions (the Bosnia operation is scheduled to end later this year), that such a large force is unnecessary.

Quite frankly, the time has come for the military to justify its existence at current levels, lest we run the risk of enduring an extensive drawdown.

While the *raison d'être* is obvious internally, it is important to note that military experience is lacking among most members of the executive and legislative branch and can be expected to decrease even further with the passage of time.

This reasoning may appear limited and selfish, but it is the bottom line. There is, however, another reason for an expanded role. In a period when there is a lot of talk about “challenges” and “taking action,” there are not many organizations who are actually willing to do something. While our national security may not be at stake (at least presently), if the United States is going to take the lead in world affairs, someone will have to be tasked to walk the proverbial “point.”

But doesn't this run risks? Are the lives of our soldiers worth it? This is a volunteer force. Although most servicemembers enlist for either educational benefits or job security, the chance to be involved in operations that can benefit oppressed, beleaguered, or impoverished people presents a real opportunity to *serve* in the finest sense of the word. Moreover, deployed forces have better safety records and lower mortality rates than non-deployed forces. Even in the Persian Gulf War, more soldiers died as a result of traffic accidents than in combat.

Greater military involvement does not mean running carelessly down a darkened alleyway. More interaction and liaison between the Armed Forces and other governmental agencies as well as non-governmental organizations will ensure that military capabilities are presented to policymakers and that our senior officers have a voice in the decisionmaking process. As impartial participants members of the Armed Forces can help to define its roles and missions of the future.

Wider roles and missions for the military will require a shift in the focus of training. While there will be requirements for new assets and training resources, what it really required is greater mental agility. This will be facilitated by educated soldiers. They will have the knowledge to shift gears when assessing the situation and dealing with an opponent in a nonlethal situation.

The military faces a choice. We can stay the course and argue against doing anything but fighting the Nation's wars. But here we run the risk of further drawdowns and loss of public confidence. Furthermore, there is a danger of not preparing for operations that we may be directed to conduct and not being ready. The alternative is to be proactive—involved in the decisionmaking process, preparing for nontraditional missions, and undertaking them. The payoff for the Nation and the Armed Forces will be immense. We have a chance to make a difference and help to shape the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We should not allow this opportunity to elude us.

—CPT Stewart W. Bentley, USA  
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*put your pen to paper . . .*

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## BACK ON TERRA FIRMA?

**To the Editor**—After reading the letter from LT Hokanson in your last issue (*JFQ*, Autumn 95), I concluded that it would be difficult to refute his evidence and argument—that the Nation does not need an Air Force—since his case was incoherent. But his opinions, generalizations, and factoids pointed to a more basic problem that deserves a response.

I have faith in the statesmen and visionaries who established the three military departments, and I believe that the role of each service is vital to national security. Moreover, I am convinced that teamwork and trust among the services are essential to victory in war. General Dwight Eisenhower said, “We have got to be of one family, and it is more important today than it ever has been.”

As I was growing up, my younger sister sometimes got more attention, knew things that I didn’t know, and did things that I couldn’t do. I suppose that when I see her now we could spend our time rehashing childhood jealousies. But we don’t. We talk about the future and what we can do together. We’ve grown up.

—Maj W. Eric Herr, USAF  
School of Advanced Airpower Studies

**To the Editor**—The trouble with the letter by LT Hokanson in the Autumn 1995 issue is that it reveals a history instructor at the Naval Academy who is a historical revisionist. He makes several historical errors and emotional arguments in proposing to eliminate the Air Force. Let me set the record straight.

First, General McPeak did not declare that the Air Force would be willing to give up major missions to the Army and naval air arm, except for long-range bombing. None of my colleagues here at the Air Force Doctrine Center remember any such comment from our former chief of staff. He did allow that the Air Force might cede close air support to the Army and the Army might yield air defense to the Air Force.

Hokanson wrongly claims that the Air Force was a creature of the Cold War. The idea for a separate air service was conceived long before the Cold War and resulted from the decisive role that airpower played during World War II. While the Cold War is over, airpower is still decisive in joint warfighting as validated by Desert Storm (which is not to say that airpower won the war as some argue—but it was the reason for a short, low-casualty ground campaign). The Air Force, not the Navy, is the principal projector of airpower. This does not mean that the naval air arm is an unimportant part of joint force air components. However, there is no way in which the Navy can supplant the Air Force in power projection strategy by appropriating long-range bombing.

Those are only a few points. The letter also makes several other errors highlighted below:

*Submarines are the most viable leg of the outdated strategic triad; therefore the Navy should be in charge of all long-range strategic bombing.* The redundant nature of the triad remains viable and necessary. The manned bomber is still a player, in part because of its flexibility. Once employed it is the only leg of the triad that is recallable. B-2s can penetrate air defenses and strike anywhere (naval weapons notwithstanding) within a day of execution. B-52s are old, but they are not outdated as Hokanson claims. While unable to penetrate modern air defenses on a long-range nuclear strike profile, they can launch standoff weapons with similar capabilities.

*Since U.S. Strategic Command is headed by a naval officer it would be easy to turn it from a joint into a Navy command.* Perhaps it would, but not too smart. It presupposes transforming the triad into a uniad. The Air Force could argue that when the next CINC is appointed (who will come from its ranks) it will be only a small step to turn this joint command over to the Air Force.

*Tomahawk cruise missiles give the Navy a long-range strike capability—within a thousand miles of any coast—and the Navy should thus get the long-range bombing role.* Tomahawks offer a valuable power projection capability in theater. But will the Navy have sufficient numbers to visit as many targets as manned systems bombed, with the same precision as during the Gulf War? Is Tomahawk flexible enough to change tasking at the last minute like a manned system? No, on both counts. What about targets more than a thousand miles inland? (Hokanson claims TLAM has a range of a thousand miles, yet I’m told it is more like 650–700 miles, including the distance from launch platforms to shore.) And long-range bombing? Will targets farther inland be hit by Navy B-1s, B-2s, or B-52s? Oops, I forgot, they are outdated. So much for targets beyond the littorals.

*Lack of coordination in long-range strike war can be solved if the Air Force is phased out and the Navy is given all long-range bombing missions.* Makes sense! The fewer the players, the easier the coordination. Fortunately, doctrine and procedures for JFACCs and their staffs provide coordination among the services and coalition partners. Actually, coordination simply becomes an intraservice rather than interservice problem in Hokanson’s little world. Air war, regardless of the players, involves immense coordination within an air arm and with other components.

*The Navy can fulfill much of the long-range and strategic bombing mission.* Oops! That is true, but “much” won’t do. Hokanson undercuts his argument against the use of joint airpower. This is why

we have joint warfare. Each service has unique capabilities that complement the others, which is even more important as forces are pared down.

*When the Air Force is scrapped, redundancy in transport, nuclear weapons, tactical air, long-range strike, et al. would be eliminated.* Can carrier battlegroups produce the requisite fighter sorties to mount a Desert Storm-type campaign? Are there enough carriers? Does the Navy have transport aircraft to haul the people, weapons, and materiel? No. And what about space? Using a similar argument, couldn’t we disband the Marine Corps? After all, the Army has performed more amphibious landings than the Marines. Even better, can’t we justify eliminating the Navy since the Army has more ships? That would greatly reduce redundancy. Stationing Air Force P-3s armed with Harpoons at strategic points around the globe could maintain sea control. It would also save money because there would no longer be a need to maintain all those ships.

*The Navy is built around the strength of airpower projection and, as the on-call air arm, would permit the elimination of the Air Force.* Presidents may ask “where are the carriers?” but are they in the right place? Probably not. They are not as flexible as our Navy brethren would have us believe. In the right place, carriers are effective tools of national policy. Even if the Navy is built around airpower, it is not *air-minded*. Of course, the Navy relies upon sea-going capabilities for airpower projection. The Air Force—*air-minded*—lives and breathes strictly with the projection of air and spacepower in mind. We need a service focused on the projection of airpower.

Each service has unique capabilities. While some seem redundant, overlapping functions are actually complementary—the means to project power in theater or elsewhere vary. Never stoop to faulty historical or emotional arguments when debating roles and missions.

—Lt Col Wade McRoberts, USAF  
Air Force Doctrine Center