

PARAMETERS

SPRING 1987

# PARAMETERS

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JOURNAL  
OF THE  
US ARMY  
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VOL. XVII NO. 1

SPRING 1987

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Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr.  
Chairman of the JCS

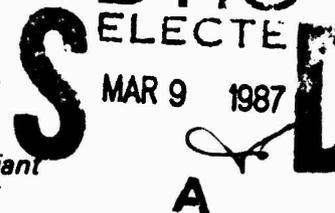
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*Book Reviews*

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Douglas Kinnard on *Eisenhower at War, 1943-1945*

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*Parameters* is a journal of ideas, providing a forum for the expression of mature professional thought on the art and science of land warfare, national and international security affairs, military strategy, military leadership and management, military history, military ethics, and other topics of significant and current interest to the US Army and the Department of Defense. Further, it serves as a vehicle for continuing the education, and thus the professional development, of War College graduates and other military officers and civilians concerned with military affairs.

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*Parameters* is published quarterly by the US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013. Telephone: (717) 245-4943, AUTOVON 242-4943. Use of funds has been approved by the Secretary of the Army in accordance with AR 310-1. Second-class postage is paid at Carlisle, PA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Parameters*, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013.

Subscriptions are available from the Superintendent of Documents, US GPO, Washington, DC 20402. Current annual cost is \$7.00 for domestic or APO addresses, \$8.75 for foreign addresses. Single copies are \$4.50 domestic, \$5.63 foreign. Make checks payable to the Superintendent of Documents. Credit card orders may be placed by calling GPO at (202) 783-3238 during business hours.

Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome; maximum length is 5000 words. Author Guide is available on request. *Parameters* articles are indexed in *ABC Pol Sci*, *Current Military Literature*, and *Military Affairs*. Views expressed in *Parameters* are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or the US Army War College. Unless copyrighted, articles may be reprinted; please credit the author and *Parameters*. Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 70-612062. US ISSN 0031-1723. USPS 413530.

87-225-142

# Senior Officer Education, Today and Tomorrow

WILLIAM J. CROWE, JR.

Ten years ago the first President of the National Defense University, Vice Admiral "Duke" Bayne, wrote an article highlighting the importance of senior service school education for our rising military leaders.<sup>1</sup> He drew special attention to the role of the war college experience in strengthening the civil-military partnership that has built and protected this nation for more than two centuries, and that forms the centerpiece of our national security posture today.

From my own perspective as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I see that partnership operating at several levels, every day:

- In the National Security Council arena civilian and military leaders work together to make top-level security policy;
- In the Department of Defense, civilian and military personnel are concerned with preparing our forces for combat and with directing them in war;
- And in our society at large, mutual understandings between citizens and their defenders put down the roots needed to sustain any military establishment over the long haul.

When the American civil-military partnership has been united, with each element conscious of its utter dependence on the other, it has been unbeatable. But when its bonds have weakened, the nation's defenses have withered, and our course on a troubled globe has wavered dangerously. All Americans have a vital interest in the nurturing of the cooperative venture—the civil-military team—that keeps this nation strong and effective on the world scene.

Admiral Bayne's point about military education was that the central meeting ground for the elements of that team—and the bridge across any gap that might develop between them—is in the mind. And our war colleges play a pivotal role in preparing rising professionals throughout the national security community to find that common ground. A decade later his observations still aptly describe the large-scale challenge addressed in the senior service schools. In this article I would like to elaborate on that theme, and to outline my own views on the challenge as I now see it.

Since becoming Chairman I have been deeply engaged in the major strategic issues facing this nation, many of which have also sparked a good deal of public discussion. The subject of defense reorganization, including JCS reform, has been particularly prominent. For a time, it spawned a veritable cottage industry among defense analysts and consultants who aim to straighten out various flaws, real and imagined, in "the system"—that is, in the Pentagon's decisionmaking structure and processes. The President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management (the Packard Commission) completed its own inquiry last year and offered a number of recommendations, many of which endorsed initiatives that were already underway. The President directed adoption of the recommendations that fell within the Pentagon's authority, and now we are also implementing the recent Goldwater-Nichols reorganization legislation.

All this effort to get the system right is producing some adjustments to the way we do business. But it would be folly to think that these adjustments will make everything easy for us. I see a host of perplexing questions which will continue to dominate the national security debate, and solutions to them will not be made more evident by any organizational scheme we might adopt. Let me cite some representative examples:

- Working to achieve an optimum balance between national security policy and resources controlled by the Congress;
- Devising a consensual formula for stabilizing our investment in defense over the long haul—getting away from those peaks and valleys which wreak havoc with the system;

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Admiral William J. Crowe, Jr., is the 11th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and has been in that post since October 1985. After graduation from the US Naval Academy in 1946, he served in submarines. Admiral Crowe has had a wide variety of high-level command assignments in Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific, and was Senior Adviser to the Vietnamese Navy Riverine Force during the Vietnam War. He holds a Master's degree in education from Stanford and a Doctorate in politics from Princeton. This article is adapted from remarks delivered by Admiral Crowe at a meeting of the National Defense University Foundation, 24 June 1986, in Washington, D.C.

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- Deciding how our military arrangements with NATO and northeast Asia should evolve;
- Engineering a cost-effective way to cope with Soviet surrogates;
- Dealing with the on-again, off-again problem of international terrorism;
- Fitting arms control proposals into a national security framework; and so on.

All of these challenges lie ahead of us, not behind us.

And no matter how much we tinker with the system, one problem will remain: How do we get the people who can deal with such thorny problems—people in uniform who are expert in their warfighting specialties and also able to assist the National Command Authorities in matters of strategy, policy, resource allocation, and operations?

Part of the answer to this question lies, of course, in the professional background of each officer—in the experiences and assignments through which he or she moves over the years. As a poet once said, men—like stones—are shaped by the places into which they come, and those influences are lasting. But another—and obviously related—part of the answer lies in the education of our officers—in what they learn in schools and from their leaders. And though that subject gets fitful attention from some who have sought to “reform” our military, it deserves much more attention than that.

At bottom, the question we are asking requires us to understand what kind of people we need, and what sorts of qualities we should seek to develop in those who stand at the threshold of senior military leadership. Here it seems to me that we have to take bearings from some of the strategic realities that the United States confronts now and will face in coming decades. Let me just sketch out a few significant ones:

First, we are and will remain an enormously wealthy and productive nation. With five percent of the globe's population, we account for 25 percent of the world's gross national product. We can afford a strong national defense if any nation can. But here at home the defense establishment is only one of many competitors for resources and must make its case with an electorate that is absorbed in domestic pursuits. American armed forces will be only as strong as the public wants them to be, and yet without convincing articulation of defense imperatives and needs, our citizens tend to lose sight of the vital role of military strength in the nation's life.

Second, America is irreversibly involved in world affairs through interrelated political, financial, economic, and military linkages which grow stronger with each decade. In some fashion, we must maintain a global defense umbrella which supports multifaceted national security goals and

objectives in a troubled and uncertain world environment. America's strategic posture is composed of an array of ends and means, and the calculus which creates it must embrace the operator's full knowledge of capabilities, sophisticated understanding of a dynamic international milieu, and intimate familiarity with national policy purposes.

Third, for the foreseeable future, the Soviet Union is the only nation in the world that can threaten the United States singly or the West in general. Moscow shows no sign of abandoning its aggressive intentions or its reliance on—and massive buildup of—military strength. For US planners, effective and credible nuclear deterrence is essential, and conventional force postures must also take into account impressive and growing Soviet capabilities.

Fourth, while the forward defense strategy we have adopted is demanding of US conventional forces, there is no walking away from it without undermining vital collective security arrangements, our overall deterrent stance, and ultimately the security of North America.

Last, we must pay attention to what is happening in the Third World and deny any free ride to state-supported terrorism, subversion, or more direct forms of aggression.

Our policy parameters are fairly well set. In essence, we know what must be done, but how to do it is the central question of our time. It is no mean challenge. If the professional military is to play a meaningful role in this game, these political and strategic imperatives demand truly broad-gauged and enlightened officers who are:

- Skilled military technicians—skilled fighters and supporters of fighters.

- Tested field commanders who can also see the uncompartimented Big Picture, understand the relationships among vested interests, and make decisions in the face of uncertainty.

- Adaptable, more than ever before, to changing circumstances. We need people who are "open minded" in every sense of the word. Our minds are like parachutes; they won't help much if they don't open when you need them. But make no mistake—this is a difficult trait to develop, particularly in today's world of phenomenal specialization and compartmentalization.

- Founded in the history of their profession and its role in the world. Genuine perspective springs from the knowledge that little is new and that the past has a great deal to teach every profession.

- Knowledgeable about the situations and concerns of American friends and allies abroad and about the dynamics of bureaucratic decisionmaking in Washington.

Our professional schools play a key, though certainly not exclusive, role in developing these characteristics and in filling the gaps left by

operational experience alone. Our war colleges, in particular, are places where these traits can be fostered and encouraged prior to their students' assumption of key responsibilities. Interestingly enough, these students profit personally as well as professionally from this challenging and mind-stretching experience. But, of course, the services and the country are the ultimate winners.

**A**lthough what I have just said seems to me perfectly reasonable, there have been others who are skeptical of our ability to produce people in uniform equipped to provide sound advice to the President and Secretary of Defense. The late Bernard Brodie, for example, in his book *War and Politics*, wrote that "there has always been and probably will always continue to be far too much pontificating and posturing on that commodity called 'military judgment,' which taken in itself, without supplemental inquiry and rumination, can be an extremely limiting thing." Brodie decried what he termed the "primitive" and "parochial" outlook of those who rise to high military positions. They were, he felt, too confident in the efficacy of force, and too uninformed about other instruments of policy and other critical factors affecting the nation's security. Military leaders, he contended, because of their professional upbringing, are simply not likely to be well-equipped to advise sensibly about "the goals and ends of peace and of war."

This critique, published in 1973, is of special interest to us because it depicts the war colleges as institutions straining valiantly to deal with an impossible problem. Brodie himself had helped to set up the National War College, and had served on its faculty and Board of Advisors. He believed that the experience there undoubtedly widened the horizons of the officers who passed through it, but that it was too brief and came too late in life to change basic attitudes acquired in earlier service.

Much has happened since then, in the military schools and in the career patterns of our services, that would no doubt encourage Brodie and soften—if not change—his assessment. Our concern for "jointness" is just one manifestation of that; we have achieved a marked degree of integration in our warfighting capabilities at all levels and are pressing for more. We are raising a new generation of officers who, in their daily professional lives, are sensitized to the joint imperative. Another example is the innovative approach taken by our war colleges to the problem of understanding war at the operational level, where national policy and strategy are translated into large-scale military maneuvers and campaigns. These studies have emphasized our need for senior military professionals—expert warfighters—who can connect political goals to military means, and who in turn can comprehend both poles of that ends-means calculus and assist in their articulation.

I am persuaded that our remarkable progress in such matters has done much to refute Brodie's basic pessimism about rigid, closed, and narrowly focused military minds. But his charges are still too important and the modern world too complex to dismiss his views even today. I would be the first to admit that we still have some distance to go to obviate those classic concerns. Certainly, our war colleges have carried the brunt of the fight thus far, and they still offer the best prospect for filling key voids in professional career patterns—in sum, giving us an officer corps better equipped to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing strategic environment.

But there are, and always have been, important attitudinal obstacles within the national security community and even within the military's own ranks which have not been totally dispelled. I have two particular schools of thought in mind. The first is composed of a group of civilian "strategists"—many from outside the government but some occasionally occupying jobs within it—who write energetic defense reform critiques. Their aim is this: they want to shape US strategy themselves. Using vague references to the honored principle of civilian control of the military, they often work to delimit the substantive spheres in which uniformed people advise and operate. In its more radical formulations, this school would be happy to have military people focus on driving ships and taking hills, leaving other matters to more talented authority. Its proponents get nervous when officers emerge who are comfortable with matters of national policy.



Computer-assisted wargaming at the US Army War College.

The second school of thought surfaces from time to time within the military itself. It focuses especially on the alleged tension between the warrior, on the one hand, and the manager and diplomat on the other. Military forces, it argues, are for killing people and destroying things, and it is a dangerous distraction to search for other talents in leaders of the armed forces.

Both of the cited perspectives have old roots in our country. The history of our war colleges is a story of a century-long struggle between the widening demands of strategic leadership and the narrow "technicist" inclinations of those who insist that the military has—or should have—little to contribute. Our first "postgraduate" military schools were technical, where officers studied artillery, cavalry, and infantry tactics. By the 1880s, however, European influence plus the need for familiarity with the theory and practice of higher-level operations led to establishment—over considerable objection—of the Naval War College. The Army followed suit 20 years later, responding to the same imperatives and overcoming similar reservations. World War I made evident the need for military instruction in industrial subjects—and we soon established the forerunner of the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. World War II then highlighted the need for education about interservice cooperation. This led to the creation of a joint Army and Navy Staff College under the Joint Chiefs of Staff—which later evolved into the National War College. There has been subsequent evolution, of course, consistent with this long-term expansion of our ideas about what military people should know and be able to do—of what the country needs from them. In 1976 the National Defense University was inaugurated, in a historic pooling of our defense community's intellectual resources. It builds on the sound traditions and achievements at all our war colleges. In its prominent wargaming focus, for instance, it recognizes what Admiral Nimitz once said: that in World War II, every move in the Pacific—even Pearl Harbor—had already been played out in war games at the Naval War College.

But my point about the war college experience is not only about pedagogy. It is, rather, that in an impatient world the war colleges are refuges for ideas, analysis, and reflection—places where warriors can come to understand not only war, but peace and how to preserve it. And, as "Duke" Bayne noted, they are institutions where we can get beyond training individuals in how things are done, by educating them also in how to decide what it is best to do. We should not underestimate the value of this time for reflection. One of my favorite lines in the movie *Patton* occurs in the scene where George C. Scott, as Patton, is standing on high ground in the North African desert, staring out through binoculars at German armor and infantry which are being repulsed by Patton's forces. An aide tells him Rommel is on the field, and Patton exclaims almost joyously: "Rommel,

you magnificent bastard, I read your book." Our war colleges are strategic assets because it is on their campuses that America's best military professionals are afforded an opportunity to read books (and to write them), to think independently, to test their views against others, to participate in disciplined inquiries that deepen their knowledge of their art, and to widen their horizons concerning how they can best contribute to the nation's defense.

It is here, also, that they enter what Secretary Weinberger has called an "Exclusive Corps"—the cadre of "Senior Government Leaders." He did not say leader of this or that organization or service. He said *Government* leader. In my judgment, that is exactly what we look to the war colleges to produce, and what they must produce if the uniformed half of the civil-military partnership is to live up to the expectations and needs of our society. Though some may persist in trying to separate the civilian strategist and the military planner, these people, as Professor Samuel Huntington has observed, are going to sink or swim together.<sup>1</sup> The sooner we all recognize this simple fact the better.

The influence of our senior service schools radiates outward from their graduates to succeeding generations of leaders in innumerable ways. Every day we feel the force of their presence more and more. But none of us, unfortunately, can afford to rest on his oars. In Washington, where the tendency to concentrate on immediate policy problems is powerful, programs whose benefits are measured in the long term can often be sadly neglected. Our instincts work all too often in favor of improving capabilities for action, while capacities for reflection languish and atrophy. I can testify that the military half of the great American civil-military partnership is especially vulnerable to capture by these dynamics. In today's world it would be a tragedy to neglect the intellectual dimensions of leadership, and we must continue the fight to keep the war colleges not only healthy but constantly improving and intellectually expanding.

H. G. Wells philosophized that human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe. We must ensure that the US military stays on the right side of the equation.

#### NOTES

1. Marmaduke G. Bayne, "The National Defense University: A Strategic Asset," *Strategic Review*, 4 (Fall 1976), 23.

2. Bernard Brodie, *War and Politics* (New York: Macmillan, 1973). The observations noted in this article appear in Chapter 10, "Strategic Thinkers, Planners, Decisionmakers."

3. Samuel P. Huntington, "Playing to Win," *The National Interest*, 3 (Spring 1986), 8; reprinted in *Parameters*, 16 (Autumn 1986), 76-82.

# Soldiers and Scribblers: A Common Mission

RICHARD HALLORAN

*1987 Richard Halloran*

Ever since the invasion of Grenada in October 1983, military officers and members of the press have debated the role of the press in covering military affairs, including combat operations. At the war colleges in Washington, Carlisle Barracks, Newport, and Montgomery, as well as in other forums, that debate has roamed over the place of the press and television in American life, the pros and cons of military coverage, and how soldiers and scribblers should treat with one another. The objective has been to defuse the bitterness, rooted in Vietnam and manifest in the absence of first-hand coverage of Grenada, that has so divided two vital institutions.

Sad to report, there's not much evidence of progress. In session after session, the same questions and allegations come up from military officers and many of the same answers are given by journalists. Granted, the audiences change from year to year, but few explanations from journalists seem to be getting through. Nor is there much evidence that military concerns are getting through to editors who make day-to-day decisions.

After having taken part in about two dozen such sessions, I have come to at least one conclusion: Military people really don't know much about the press and television. Random samples in seminars of 15 people and audiences of 300 officers, mostly field grade, show that only about half have ever talked seriously with a journalist, and less than a third more than once. Few military officers have done the factual research needed to determine whether their scant experience with the press is typical or atypical; few have done the content analyses to see whether their impressions can

withstand scrutiny; few have examined the First Amendment, the development of the press and television, or the roles that gatherers of news have played in the military history of the United States.

Lieutenant Colonel Gerald W. Sharpe, a student at the Army War College in 1985-86, put together a useful—and revealing—study of the experience of his classmates with the press and their consequent attitudes. Colonel Sharpe reported that “more than half the respondents (53.5 percent) had never spent more than one day with the media.” He found that 69 percent had spent no time with the media during their last assignments. In addition, he wrote, “More than one half of the officers indicated that they had less than one day of training in their careers about the media and more than 71 percent had three days or less.”

Thus, he concluded: “Many senior officers have had very little personal experience in a direct working relationship with the media and have had even less formal training about how the media works or its roles and missions in American society. In spite of this, they hold very strong negative views about the media.”

In short, it would seem that the vast majority of military officers have vague impressions, emotional reactions, and gut feelings about the press and television but are, in fact, operating in ignorance. That is a harsh word, admittedly, but the facts would appear to justify it.

The reasons for the ignorance, which were beyond the scope of Colonel Sharpe's research, would seem to be three. First, American high schools and universities do little to teach young citizens about the function of the press and television. The schools teach political science, economics, and sociology but not much about the grease of communications that makes national institutions work. Second, the military educational system does little to teach officers about the various media. A “media day” at a war college and a half day in “charm school” for freshly minted generals and admirals are not enough.

And third, we in the press do a miserable job of explaining ourselves. As large segments of American society—military officers are far from alone in this—have recently questioned the ethics, motives, accuracy, fairness, and responsibility of the press and television, editors and reporters

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Richard Halloran is a military correspondent for *The New York Times* in Washington, and author of a recently published book, *To Arm a Nation: Rebuilding America's Endangered Defense*. A graduate of Dartmouth, he earned an M.A. at the University of Michigan and was awarded a Ford Foundation Fellowship in Advanced International Reporting at Columbia. He enlisted in the Army in 1952, was commissioned through OCS, and served with the 82d Airborne Division at Fort Bragg and with military advisory groups in Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam. He has also worked for *Business Week* and *The Washington Post*. He has been with *The Times* since 1969, and has covered military affairs since 1979.

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belatedly have come to realize that their institutions are in deep trouble. Even so, we have been slow to respond and are still, in this correspondent's view, well behind the curve.

Here, then, is one reporter's summary of the questions asked, complaints made, and allegations charged by military officers since Grenada. These are my own replies based on three years of meetings with military people, seven years of covering the armed forces, and thirty years of experience in journalism. Let it be underscored that what follows represents the views of no one else even though it takes into account what other journalists have written or said. In addition, let it be understood that the battles of the press and the armed forces over Vietnam itself will not be fought again here. With the passage of time, that conflict between officers and journalists has become less germane to the issues of the day and is being shifted, rightly, to the province of historians.

- **The Media.** Military officers and civilians alike talk about "the media" as if it were a single, monolithic, structured institution.

The institution is, in fact, quite the opposite. There is no such thing as "the media," no lockstep, all-encompassing institution, any more than there is "the military" or "the military mind." For one thing, "media" is plural, not singular. The media include an almost breathtaking diversity of channels of information. Among them are news agencies or wire services, radio, television, newspapers, weekly magazines, monthly magazines, quarterlies, books, and, in some definitions, motion pictures.

Within the realm of newspapers, there are major metropolitan papers like *The New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, regional papers like the *Boston Globe* and the *Chicago Tribune*, a host of local dailies and weeklies, and not a few scandal sheets. Within newspapers are the news columns, features, analytical articles, editorials, and columnists. Radio and television include national networks and the local stations. National Public Radio and cable television add to the diversity. What is known as the trade press adds still another dimension. In the military field are, to mention but a few, *Defense Daily*, a newsletter; *Defense Week* and *Aviation Week*; *Armed Forces Journal* and similar monthlies; plus quarterlies like *Parameters*, the *Air University Review*, and, perhaps the latest on the scene, the *Naval Submarine Review*.

In sum, "the media" is a myth.

- **The power of the press.** Many Americans have asserted that the press and television have become too powerful. Perhaps the case most often cited is the resignation of President Nixon under pressure.

Like "the media," the power of the press is a myth. The press has *influence*, not *power*, and the distinction is important. Military officers have power in that they have the legal and, if necessary, the physical force to have orders obeyed. The press has neither, and cannot enforce anything.

On the other hand, the press and television exert enormous influence on the public agenda by what they select to publish or broadcast and what they choose to ignore. In some cases, a newspaper can set the public agenda for many months, as *The New York Times* did with the Pentagon Papers. Conversely, newspapers are often criticized by vested special interests for ignoring their particular causes, both right and left.

The determining factor in what is published and what is withheld is that elusive thing called news judgment. It is perhaps the most difficult element to define in all journalism. News judgment is a combination of deciding what the public needs to know, wants to know, and has a right to know. News judgment derives from an editor's or reporter's sense of history, experience, point of view, taste, and that intangible called instinct. It is, and journalists should acknowledge this freely, a subjective judgment on which two journalists will often disagree. Differing news judgments are the cause of differing front pages or differing ways in which an article is written. The saving grace is that, over time, extreme news judgments do not survive because competition provides a check and balance.

Regarding the press and President Nixon, history shows that the press, notably *The Washington Post*, influenced the public agenda by bringing the Watergate caper to public attention and by continuing to dig into the story. But there came a time in that episode when the press ran out of steam because it lacked the authority to issue subpoenas or to force testimony. The issue then passed to the Congress and the courts, following constitutional procedures, and it was those institutions, not the press, that forced Mr. Nixon to resign.

- **Right to know.** Many military officers hold that the concept of "the people's right to know" is not in the Constitution and has been made up for the convenience of the press.

Most journalists would argue that the people's right to know is implicit in the First Amendment and was among the basic reasons the Founding Fathers adopted the amendment. Just where the explicit phrase originated is not clear, but among the earliest references to it is one from an Army officer, Brevet Major General Emory Upton, who wrote a book after the Civil War titled *The Military Policy of the United States*. In that work, General Upton sought to explain the lessons of the war and to seek improvement in the nation's military posture. In the introduction, he made a signal contribution to the understanding of the First Amendment:

The people who, under the war powers of the Constitution, surrender their liberties and give up their lives and property have a right to know why our wars are unnecessarily prolonged. They have a right to know whether disasters have been brought about through the neglect and ignorance of Congress, which is intrusted with the power to raise and

support armies, or through military incompetency. Leaving their representatives free to pay their own salaries, the people have a right to know whether they have devoted their time to studying the art of government.

- *Motives.* In Colonel Sharpe's research, he found that "written comments on the chief causes of the conflict between the Army and the media reveal a basic distrust of the media's motives and objectives." In discussions, many officers have asserted, "You do it for the money." Or, in a more general allegation, "Everything you do is just to sell newspapers."

The first charge, to be candid, is laughable and on a par with saying that an officer joined the Army to get rich. A few television personalities, to be sure, drive to the bank each week in armored cars. Generally, salaries on major publications are behind those in the military service, given equivalent education, age, and time on the job. On smaller publications, salaries are far behind.

Young men and women become journalists for many reasons. Among them are a curiosity about the world, the chance to travel and to meet all sorts of people, and the opportunity for personal recognition. The newspaper byline is like the insignia of rank worn on an officer's shoulders. The unpredictable excitement and the driving pace appeal to many journalists, and the competition turns most on. For some, reporting and writing is a way of helping to set a national or state or local agenda and thus to influence the life of the republic, which is a form of public service.

On the second point, most publications exist on what is known as the three-legged stool of news, circulation, and advertising, a concept that appears little understood outside of journalism. The critical leg is content. To be successful, a publication must provide something people want to read or believe they need to read. Because different people want or must read different things, different publications cater to different audiences. Conversely, if a publication does not provide what people want or need, it will fail. The journalistic graveyard is full of monuments to publishers and editors who did not understand that point.

The provision of good or necessary or useful reading material is what builds a subscription list or newsstand sales, which add up to circulation. Because advertisers want to reach those same readers, they buy advertising space. In another little-understood point, it is the sale of advertising space, not the sale of newspapers, that provides far and away the largest part of a publication's income. That income, in turn, pays for salaries, travel, newsprint, and the other costs of publishing a paper.

The same cycle is true of television—content, viewers, advertising time—and of magazines. Only the wire services, which carry no advertising, earn their income from the sale of their product.

A legitimate question is whether a publication can be controlled by advertisers. In large publications, with many diverse advertisers, the answer is no. Local newspapers are more susceptible to pressure from a few dominant advertisers. But if the content of the paper is so good the community will not do without it, even smaller papers can withstand pressure from advertisers.

Critics assert that the press and television are merely commercial enterprises, implying that they should not have the place given them under the First Amendment. But that argument overlooks the reality that a news enterprise in America's capitalistic society must earn money to do its job. The alternative is government ownership. Down that road, as history as shown amply, lies the sort of totalitarian regime found in the Soviet Union.

• *Ethics.* At the Air War College, an officer rose in the auditorium to ask, "What a lot of us have on our minds is: Do you guys have any ethics?"

The answer is yes.

Reflecting the independence of the press invested by the First Amendment, there is no sweeping code of ethics imposed on the press from the outside. Each publication or network fashions its own, some of which is written, other of which is understood. Professional groups, such as Sigma Delta Chi, have canons that have been published as voluntary guidelines.

At *The New York Times*, for instance, there is a thick file of policies, like case law, that has accumulated over the years. For example, top management recently circulated a memo updating the policy on conflicts of interest. No reporter may write about a company in which he or she has invested, or cover an institution with which he may be remotely connected. Business reporters may not trade or play the stock market. An education reporter may not run for the school board nor a political reporter for the city council. A sportswriter may not accept free tickets. Military correspondents should not own stock in a defense industry. No one may accept a gift or take a junket.

Beyond that are individual ethics learned from parents, teachers, churches, and role models. Like motives, they vary by person, with some journalists working with unquestioned integrity and others, unhappily for the craft, skating on thin ethical ice.

• *Professionalism.* The allegation holds that journalists, unlike doctors, lawyers, and military officers, are not professionals.

In a narrow sense, that is true. In keeping with the First Amendment, journalists are not licensed by government in the manner of the traditional professions. The practice of journalism, moreover, is a highly skilled craft, perhaps even more art than science.

In the best journalists, professionalism is an attitude, a cast of mind, an instinct, and a demonstration of skill at reporting, writing, and

explaining with integrity, accuracy, and fairness. The finest compliment one journalist can bestow on another is to say that he or she is a "pro." Conversely, to be labeled an amateur is to be scorned; unfortunately, journalism today has its share of amateurs.

- **Accountability.** A corollary to the questions of ethics and professionalism is the allegation that unlike military officers, the press is not accountable. Some assert that the press is irresponsible.

While members of the press and television are not accountable in the formal manner of military officers, they are definitely held accountable through a network of public opinion, constitutional and legal restraints, competitive pressures, and company policy. In many ways, the press is held as accountable as any institution in America, and perhaps more so, given its visibility. The people to whom a newspaper is most accountable are its readers. If they don't like what the paper reports, they stop reading it. If they don't like a TV news anchor, they switch him off. The comment is often made that nobody elected the press, which is true. But the press is voted on more than any other institution in America, and journalists more than any elected official. A daily newspaper or television network faces the voters every day, and is given a thumbs up or thumbs down. If the thumbs continue to turn down, the journalist can be out of a job or the newspaper out of existence.

Second, the First Amendment, while broadly written, is not absolute and has been refined by the Supreme Court. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, an eloquent defender of the First Amendment, wrote perhaps the most famous and most useful test of freedom of speech and the press in the case entitled *Schenck v. the United States*. He said:

The character of every act depends upon the circumstances in which it is done. . . [T]he most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theatre and causing a panic. . . [T]he question in every case is whether the words used are in such circumstances and of such a nature as to create a clear and present danger.

Libel laws, especially under recent court rulings, impose marked restraints on the press, particularly with regard to accuracy. Other checks come from competitors. A newspaper making a mistake can be almost certain that it will be corrected the next day in the opposing paper. Head-to-head newspaper competition, unfortunately, has declined in recent years because papers have failed or been merged with more successful publications. Even so, the various media compete with one another; *The New York Times* considers ABC News and *Time* magazine to be as much the competition as *The Washington Post* or *Newsday*.

Lastly, individual reporters are held accountable by their employers. Minor mistakes, if they are few, are tolerated in an imperfect world, but glaring or frequent mistakes are not. Janet Cooke, who wrote a fictitious story for *The Washington Post*, and Foster Winans, who fed inside information from *The Wall Street Journal* to a stock broker, no longer work in journalism.

- *Inaccuracy.* The allegation is that the press all too often just doesn't get things right.

This is probably the single most legitimate complaint among all of those heard. The press and television are rampant with errors of fact, many of them minor, such as getting an officer's rank wrong, or misquoting him slightly but enough to change the meaning of what he said, or leaving out an important qualifier that would have put the event or speech into perspective.

It is the accumulation of small error, moreover, that has so eroded the credibility of the press today. Worse, many editors and reporters are cavalier about it, passing off errors as inevitable given the amount of information that is gathered, collated, and printed against daily deadlines.

Mistakes are made for a multitude of reasons. Reporters may hear things wrong, or fail to check or follow up. An inexperienced reporter, like a second lieutenant or ensign, may not have understood the nuances of what he has heard or seen. Editors, whose view of the world often differs from that of their reporters, may insist that a story be written to conform with their views. Copy editors may make careless changes, cuts, or insertions that change facts and meaning, or allow the error of a reporter to slip by.

The culprits are mostly time and competition. There is a daily rush to judgment in which facts are assembled and decisions are made by reporters and editors with one eye on the clock. It is common for a reporter to learn something at 4 p.m., to have one hour to check it out and gather more facts, to begin writing at 5 p.m., and to finish a 1000-word article at 6 p.m. After that, a senior editor may have 15 minutes to scrutinize the story for general content and a copy editor 30 minutes to get it ready for the printer. That is not much time.

Interestingly, and perhaps paradoxically, the public seems to forgive big errors more readily than small ones. The episodes involving Janet Cooke and Foster Winans are seen as aberrations; Cooke and Winans are seen as dishonest journalists who deliberately did something wrong but who do not represent the vast majority of journalists.

But readers and viewers, rightly, do not forgive mistakes of omission or commission, especially when the report is about something on which they are informed. Do we hear about it? You bet. There is always a reader out there who scrutinizes the paper with a dictionary in one hand and a microscope in the other, who takes considerable pleasure in catching the newspaper in the wrong and calls to say so. But, if truth be told, their ad-

monitions are all too often received politely and then brushed aside with little lasting effect.

- *Slanted news.* Many military officers charge that much in the press is not objective and thus is unfair.

What is said to be slanted news, however, often depends far more on the reader than the writer. It is a question, in the worn analogy, of seeing the bottle half empty or half full. Perhaps the objective way would be to describe the 16-ounce bottle as holding eight ounces of liquid and letting the reader decide for himself.

That is inadequate, however, when the writer seeks to explain what is going on. Increasingly, the role of journalism in America is not merely to describe what's in the bottle but to explain why and how it got that way and what it means to the community or the republic. What was once called "interpretive journalism" has gotten a bad name because of abuses. Today, many journalists seek to practice what might be called "explanatory journalism," which means assembling facts in a way that makes sense to a reader and then explaining them. Enter the element of judgment, which immediately puts the reporter on a slippery slope, with few ever being sure-footed enough to traverse it all of the time without taking a fall.

That reporters are not objective is partly true because no human being is fully objective. Each has a point of view that derives from his upbringing, education, and experience. That becomes a set of values that a journalist applies to his work. Some journalists covering military affairs, for instance, believe that military power is needed to protect the United States in a rough and tumble world. Others believe that military power is



Courtesy USAF/AFIP

The delayed arrival of reporters on Grenada is still controversial.

evil and if the world were rid of it, prospects for the survival of the human race would be more promising. The point of view that a journalist brings to his or her work thus does much to determine what he or she chooses to cover and how. The journalist who thinks that military power is necessary will focus on one set of facts, while the journalist who dislikes military power will assemble a different set of facts. It should be said here that the "journalism of advocacy" found primarily in the "alternative press" is anathema to professional reporters.

Stripping a reporter of his point of view would be impossible, but good reporters acknowledge, to themselves and in the copy, that there are other points of view. It is there that balance, perspective, and fairness come into the writing. Achieving that balance may be the hardest thing in journalism, and the journalist only deceives himself and his reader if he thinks he does a good job of it every day.

- **Bad news.** A common cry: "You never print anything but bad news."

That is only partly true. Like slanted news, whether news is good or bad is determined far more by the reader or viewer than by the reporter. A headline reading "Nixon Resigns" may be bad news if the reader is a conservative Republican but good news if he is a liberal Democrat. Conversely, the headline "Reagan Wins Reelection by Landslide" is considered good by Republicans, not so good by Democrats.

Moreover, few people remember the good news. A suggestion for a war college research paper: Establish criteria as to whether news is good, neutral, or bad. Take the main news section of any newspaper for a month and divide the articles into those categories. The majority will most likely be neutral. Then sample other officers to see which articles they remember.

The allegation is right, however, to the extent that things going wrong are newsworthy. Americans expect things to go right, and that is not necessarily news, because news is what makes today different from yesterday. Americans expect military officers to be competent, tanks to be bought at the lowest possible cost, and airplanes to fly right-side-up. Soldiers and sailors are the sons and daughters of the readers; they expect officers to care for the troops, and when that doesn't happen they want to know about it. When tanks cost too much or planes don't fly right, the readers want to know why the government has not spent their money well.

- **Invasion of privacy.** Many Americans believe that journalists too often invade the privacy of prominent and private citizens alike.

There is some truth to this allegation, but less than meets the eye. Newspaper reporters and, more often perhaps, television cameramen set up what are known as "stakrouts" near the home of a person under investigation, or barge into living rooms at times of distress, or pursue people who wish not to be interviewed. Occasionally a reporter does not identify

himself when asking questions, which is particularly reprehensible when talking with people inexperienced in dealing with the press.

On the other hand, by far the majority of people who appear on camera or who are interviewed by a reporter do so willingly. No law forces people to talk when they don't want to, save under subpoena. Curiously, for some people who have just suffered a loss, such as the death of a member of the family at the hands of a terrorist, talking through the press to neighbors and compatriots has a cathartic effect. It helps people to get their grief out where it can be handled. It may also be a trait particular to Americans that we are ready to try to comfort neighbors, though they be strangers, in an hour of need, and we want to know who is hurting. Witness the outpouring of sympathy to the families of the Marines killed in Beirut, or the hay sent by farmers in the Middle West to farmers in the South during the drought.

In addition, readers and viewers never know about the times a reporter asks to interview a person who has suffered a loss but backs off when that person says no. It happens, and often, but the only thing the reader may see is a line saying Mrs. Jones was not available.

• *Hidden sources.* The complaint is worded something like this: "When we read you in the paper, we don't know where you got your information or whom you've been talking to."

It's a fair comment and a valid criticism. Far too much in the press and on television today is hidden in what journalists call "blind sourcing." That's especially true in reports from Washington that cite "Administration officials," "a policymaking official," "military officers," "congressional staff aides," "defense industry executives." For all the reader knows, those sources could have been office boys answering the telephones.

While the press is primarily to blame for blind sourcing, Administration officials, military officers, and congressional staff aides who decline to speak for the record must assume some of the responsibility. More often than not, the reason for not going on the record has nothing to do with national security or government policy but has everything to do with protocol. The colonel doesn't want his name in the paper for fear the general will be upset; the general doesn't want to be quoted because the assistant secretary will be miffed; the assistant secretary thinks the secretary or even the White House should be the source.

Reporters, confronted with that, agree all too readily to take the information on "background," which isn't background at all but not for attribution for reasons of protocol or politics. A careful reader will notice that the vast majority of non-attributed stories come from within the government, and mostly from within the Administration. The press thus permits itself to be used by the Administration to float trial balloons, to advocate or oppose policies without being held responsible for the comments, and to play all manner of diplomatic, political, and bureaucratic games.

Periodically, journalists in Washington try to tighten up the use of blind sourcing, but those efforts have failed so far because everyone fears losing a competitive advantage. One newspaper might say it will no longer accept blind sourcing; that will last until its competitor comes out with a hot story citing "Administration sources."

- **Arrogance.** Often the charge of arrogance seems to mean bad manners on the part of reporters, and particularly reporters on television who are more visible than those in print. But print reporters are also held culpable by officers who see them in action at press conferences, whether in Washington or elsewhere.

This, too, appears to be a legitimate complaint. Reporters have been caught up in, and probably have contributed to, the general decline of civility in American life. Many reporters, especially young reporters, seem to think that acting like tough guys out of the movie *Front Page* is necessary to do their jobs. In their defense, and it is admittedly a lame defense, reporters are no more rude than many lawyers, government officials, policemen, bicycle riders, secretaries, business executives, and diplomats.

Even so, the reporter who often asks the best and toughest questions in a Pentagon news conference, Charles Corddry of the *Baltimore Sun*, is a gentleman who rarely raises his voice and is consistently courteous. In his time, Mr. Corddry has skewered the most evasive senior political and military officials with penetrating questions that have left them mumbling like schoolboys. But it has been done in a civil manner.

- **Liberals.** The allegation is that the media are controlled by liberals.

That must come as a shock to *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Washington Times*, the *Manchester Union Leader*, the *San Diego Union*, and several hundred other papers, not to say *U.S. News and World Report* and the *National Review*. Columnists such as William Safire of *The New York Times*, James J. Kilpatrick and George Will, whose work appears in *The Washington Post*, and William Buckley, whose views appear not only in *National Review* but in other outlets, must be amused.

There are several problems with the allegation that liberalism runs rampant in the press. First, few people agree on what a liberal is; definitions run from 19th-century liberalism to 20th-century socialism. Second, even a 1981 study by two academicians, Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman, didn't make the case that what they called the "media elite" was heavily liberal. They found that barely half of the reporters considered themselves liberal, that the vast majority took conservative economic positions such as favoring private enterprise, and that many reporters were liberal primarily on social issues such as civil rights. A 1985 survey by William Schneider and I. A. Lewis in *Public Opinion*, published by the conservative American

Enterprise Institute, addressed a more important question: "Do readers detect any bias when they read their daily newspapers?" The authors concluded: "Not really. . . . There is no evidence that people perceive the newspapers they read as strongly biased to the left." In a similar study in *Public Opinion*, Barbara G. Farah and Elda Vale asserted: "The professional standards of journalism dictate that no one gets a break. Ask George McGovern, Edward M. Kennedy, or Geraldine Ferraro whether liberals are treated with special solicitude by the press."

Put another way, if the press is so pervasively liberal, how come Ronald Reagan won 49 of 50 states in the 1984 election?

- **Operational security.** Many officers assert that the presence of the press during a military operation jeopardizes security.

That is an allegation without basis in historical fact. An examination of the record in World Wars I and II, where there was censorship, and in Korea and Vietnam, where there were guidelines but no censorship, shows that rarely did the press endanger operational security. In Vietnam, Barry Zorthian, long the government's chief spokesman, has said he knows of only a half-dozen instances in which a correspondent broke the guidelines; three of those were inadvertent.

The record is not perfect. In a recent case, a wire service report disclosed a Marine fire direction team's position in the mountains behind Beirut during the conflict in Lebanon. That did jeopardize the operation and perhaps the lives of those Marines, and it should not have been printed. The dispatch could have been written in a way such that the facts were made known without giving information useful to an adversary.

Over the long run, however, the record shows that with a modicum of common sense, consultation, and planning, military forces can preserve operational security while correspondents go about their jobs. At the end of a long discussion of this issue at the Naval War College, a retired admiral asserted: "Operational security is not the issue. The issue is that when you write about us, you make us look bad."

The admiral had it exactly right—operational security is not the issue.

- **Classified information.** Perhaps no single question is raised more, and with more heat, than the allegation: "You print classified information."

Right. The press has published classified information in the past and will in the future. For one thing, the classification system is almost a farce, is abused for political and bureaucratic reasons that have nothing to do with national security, and thus breeds contempt. For another, there are laws and court decisions that govern what may and may not be printed and the press is obliged to operate within those constraints, but they do not cover most classified information. Third, responsible publications are keenly

aware that the release of sensitive information—which is not the same as classified information—could jeopardize lives, operations, intelligence sources, or technical capabilities.

Legally, it is important to understand that there is no law authorizing the classification of information, or forbidding the publication of classified information. The classification system is based in executive orders, the latest being Executive Order 12356, signed by President Reagan in April 1982. By definition, executive orders apply to members of the executive branch, and to no one outside it. A journalist or any other citizen, therefore, breaks no law by disclosing classified information.

Several narrowly written laws apply to journalists as well as to other citizens. One is found in sections 793 through 798 of Title 18 of the *U.S. Code*, forbidding the disclosure of intelligence gained by communications intercepts. Another is the law that forbids the public identification of intelligence agents. A third is in certain sections of the Atomic Energy Act pertaining to nuclear weapons.

What about the espionage laws? The Association of the Bar of the City of New York recently did a study of that statute, which forbids the unauthorized disclosure of information to a foreign nation with the intent to do harm to the United States. In its report, the association said: "We conclude that prosecution under the espionage laws is appropriate only in cases of transmission of properly classified information to a foreign power with the intent to injure the United States or to aid a foreign power."

Note several phrases: The association said "properly classified information," not just any classified information; "to a foreign power," not to American citizens, voters, and taxpayers; "with the intent to injure the United States," not to foster the public debate on serious issues confronting a democratic republic.

The association went on to say: "Other uses of the statutes, such as prosecution of the media or those providing information for the sake of public debate, are inappropriate."

What about moral obligations? The journalist, indeed, must deal with serious moral obligations when he gains access to sensitive information that, if disclosed, would cause jeopardy to life, the security of troops, a piece of military technology, or a valuable intelligence source. The crux comes when the disclosure would cause direct, immediate, and irreparable damage. It would not make any difference whether the information was classified, but whether the disclosure would do genuine harm.

This view is rooted in the doctrine of "clear and present danger" enunciated by Justice Holmes and reinforced by other court rulings. In *Neur v. Minnesota*, Justice Charles Evans Hughes said that in time of declared war, "no one would question but that a government might prevent . . . the publication of sailing dates of transports or the number and location of

troops." In the case of the Pentagon Papers, one justice wrote that publication of national security information could be prohibited if the government could show that it would "inevitably, directly and immediately cause the occurrence of an event kindred to imperiling the safety of a transport at sea." Two other justices, in a concurring opinion, said the government must present proof that disclosure "will result in direct, immediate, and irreparable damage to our nation or its people."

There have been instances, not generally known because of their sensitive nature, in which journalists have withheld information that, if published, would have caused a clear and present danger. Several reporters in Washington, for instance, knew that American hostages had taken refuge in the Canadian Embassy in Teheran in 1979. To have printed that would surely have put those Americans in danger. *The New York Times* and other publications made a deliberate effort to determine which passengers aboard the hijacked TWA airliner in Beirut were military personnel so that their identity could be kept *out* of the paper. In another case, newspapers and networks for many months withheld information about the Central Intelligence Agency's attempt to raise a Russian submarine with the ship *Glomar Explorer*. Some of those decisions not to publish were made by editors who applied common sense and the standard of clear and present danger, while others were made after consulting with government authorities.

Editors have not always made the right decisions, but over the years many publications have been far more careful than anyone in the government has been willing to concede. Conversely, the government has failed to level with the press or has cried wolf so often that it has lost credibility. Both political parties have been guilty; it is not a partisan matter.

On classification itself, many journalists have little regard for the system because it is mindless. According to the 1985 report to the President from the Information Security Oversight Office, the latest report available, the Department of Defense alone made 22,322,895 original and derivative classification decisions that year. Of those, 446,458 were to classify something top secret.

Such numbers, on the face of it, are absurd. There are not nearly half a million things so secret that the disclosure of them would constitute a clear and present danger to the United States, nor would disclosure cause grievous damage to the national security. Justice Potter Stewart once wrote: "For when everything is classified, nothing is classified, and the system becomes one to be disregarded by the cynical or the careless, and to be manipulated by those intent on self-protection or self-promotion."

As an example of mindless classification, the following paragraph was taken from a Navy budget document classified secret; the paragraph itself was also classified secret. It said, in full:

The Navy must continue to attract and retain sufficient numbers of high-quality, skilled and motivated people. Compensation and quality of life improvements must be competitive in the job market. Ways must be found to reduce requirements for administrative functions, reduce personnel turbulence and permanent change of stations moves.

Had this paragraph been printed on every recruiting poster in the nation, it would not have harmed the national security.

Note, too, that complaints from government about classified information in the press usually describe the leak as "an unauthorized disclosure." In the eyes of many government officials and military officers, "authorized disclosure" is permissible if it serves their purposes. But that poses two different sets of ground rules, one for government, the other for journalists. Few journalists are willing to play in that rigged game; when the government cleans up the system and plays by the same rules it wishes to impose on journalists, then perhaps the system can be made to work.

- **Leaks.** An Air Force lieutenant colonel suggested that military people were baffled by leaks. "Just how does a leak work?" he asked.

The popular notion of a leak is a "Deep Throat" who signals a reporter with a flower pot and then meets him draped in a black cloak in an alley in the dark of night.

Not so. Most leaks occur in the light of day in the office of a senior political official or military officer, or someone on their staffs. The cliché holds that the ship of state is the only vessel that leaks from the top. It is a cliché, but it is also true. Relatively few leaks come from dissidents outside the government. Or, as a British official put it: "Briefing is what I do, and leaking is what you do."

A professor at Harvard, Martin Linsky, recently did a survey of nearly 1000 senior officials who held office from the Johnson through the Reagan Administrations, and interviewed 38 officials and journalists. From that, he concluded that 42 percent of the officials had at one time or another leaked information to a journalist. Professor Linsky also thought the percentage was really higher, saying: "Some who did would presumably not admit it and others would define their leaks narrowly enough so as to exclude their own practices."

The officials gave a variety of reasons for leaking: to counter a false report, to gain attention for a policy, to develop a good relationship with a reporter, to send a message to another branch of government, to undermine another official's position, to inform other officials and the public of a policy decision, to divert attention from another issue.

Stephen Hess, of the Brookings Institution, who has studied the operations and foibles of the press in Washington, identified six kinds of leaks in his book, *The Government/Press Connection*: the policy leak or

pitch to gain or to erode support; the trial balloon, which discloses a proposal under consideration to see who supports and who opposes; the ego leak, in which the leaker shows off how important he is and how much he knows; the goodwill leak, in which the leaker hopes to accumulate credit with a reporter for use later; the animus or grudge leak that seeks to damage the reputation or programs of an opponent; and the whistle-blower leak, usually the last resort of a person who has been frustrated in getting changes inside the government.

One more should be added, the inadvertent leak, sometimes called a tip. It happens when a source drops a hint that flags a reporter that something newsworthy is going on. The reporter then uses that to lever out more information elsewhere. This happens more often than is realized, and the original leaker may never suspect whence the tip came.

Lastly, rarely do leaks appear in the paper as the leaker intended. Most good reporters, knowing that leaks are self-serving, seek more information from other sources before going into print. Moreover, reputable newspapers do not print pejoratives from an anonymous source. Either the source puts his name on it or it's not fit to print.

- **Reporters lacking military experience.** Many officers complain that reporters, mostly young people, have not served in the armed forces and therefore are not competent to cover them.

The criticism does not hold. Capable reporters learn to cover politics without running for office, or business without having been entrepreneurs, or education without having taught school. Similarly, lawyers defend clients without having themselves stood trial and doctors treat patients for diseases they themselves have not suffered.

Having said that, a military reporter who has served in the armed forces can have an advantage over a competitor who has not. The reporter who has served may have a grasp of military culture and lingo that escapes his colleague and may have the credentials to establish rapport with military sources more easily. Remembering which end of the rifle the bullet comes out has rarely hurt a military correspondent.

On the other hand, the ranks of journalism today are full of reporters, editors, and producers who have been in military service—and hate every minute of it. They would not necessarily make better military correspondents than the reporter who has not served, and would not be welcomed by military sources.

- **Taking up time.** An Army major in a military-media seminar leaned back from the table and said: "You're a pain in the ass. A media visit is more trouble than an inspection by a three-star general."

Maybe so. But that is a self-inflicted wound, as many reporters require only a few hours of time with informed officers and some time in the field with the troops. Television may need more, as producers can be demanding when it comes to pictures.

Comments like the major's, moreover, reflect a defensive attitude and a failure to understand that military officers are accountable to the voters and taxpayers through a variety of channels. The press is one of them—only one, to be sure, but still one of them.

Further, such comments indicate a failure to understand a principle of military life, especially in a democratic nation: The armed forces of the United States cannot long sustain a military operation without the consent and, indeed, the vigorous approval of the American people. Of all the lessons Americans should have learned from Vietnam, surely that must be high on the list.

It would be far better, for the nation and the armed forces, if officers looked more positively on the rare occasions they are called upon to deal with the press and saw them as opportunities to build support in the public. It should also be seen as a chance to show off the troops, who almost always like the attention they get.

In sum, talking with many journalists is worth an officer's time. It is also among his duties, and will become more so as he rises in rank.

- *The press in World War II.* The allegation is that the press today is different from what it was in 1945.

Right. So are Army officers, Navy pilots, lawyers, doctors, and Indian chiefs, butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers. The whole world is different today, making the comparison rather silly. Just as every other institution in America has changed, so have the media. Television, the speed of communications, the education of reporters, and the demands of readers are but a few of the differences.

Former Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger likes to assert that "the age of Ernie Pyle is dead." But that is another myth, for there never was an age of Ernie Pyle, the legendary correspondent of World War II who carved out a unique place covering the grunts. Ernie Pyle, who was killed in the Pacific just before the war ended, had the luxury of writing about the grunt's-eye view of the war because hundreds of other reporters covered the daily news of the war.

Moreover, Ernie Pyle rarely covered what he called "the big picture" and thus was not confronted with the issues that military correspondents today must handle. He made his name writing about the relatively simple, focused existence of men in combat, not about the complexities of the military budget, or quality controls in defense plants, or whether women should be permitted in combat, or the mysteries of nuclear warfighting.

Reed Irvine, a critic of the press who runs an operation called Accuracy in Media, regularly lambastes journalists for not going to the field with the troops. The charge does not hold up—witness the number of reporters who were with troops in Vietnam, with about 60 getting killed and

several winning combat decorations. Beyond that, Mr. Irvine and others who applauded the exclusion of reporters from Grenada can't have it both ways. Journalists can't be faulted for not being with the troops if the high command blocks them out.

• *Lack of patriotism.* Occasionally an officer or a civilian has charged that members of the press are unpatriotic because they uncover incompetence, fraud, lies, or other wrongdoing in government. Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger has come close to charging the press with treason and with giving aid and comfort to the enemy. Patrick Buchanan, the director of communications for President Reagan, questioned the loyalty of the press to the nation when details of the Iran-Contra affair were exposed.

Such accusations bear a tone of self-righteousness, as if to say that only the speaker is loyal to America and anyone who disagrees with him is unpatriotic. That attitude might be better suited to a Tory who believed in the divine right of kings than to an American with moral and intellectual roots in the Revolution's struggle for freedom from an oppressive government.

Accusing the press of disloyalty also betrays a lack of faith in the robust democracy that is America, the last best hope for human freedom on the face of the earth. Ours is an open society dedicated to the proposition that honest debate and dissent and a healthy distrust of the power of government are the order of the day. As an Irishman, John Curran, said in 1790, "The condition upon which God hath given liberty to man is eternal vigilance."

In a sense, soldiers and scribblers share a common mission. Under the Constitution, soldiers are charged with maintaining a vigil against external threats; journalists are charged with vigilance against internal enemies who would corrupt and destroy our way of life.

Contrast, for instance, the American handling of Watergate and the Soviet Union's handling of Chernobyl. It is a point overlooked that Watergate proved, perhaps more than anything else in the 20th century, the strength of the American political system. America was able to withstand the shock and to have a peaceful transition of power that few other nations would have experienced. The Soviet Union, where the press is an arm of government, dealt with the accident at the nuclear power plant by trying to hide it from the Russian people and the world. In those cases, it would seem undeniable that the American press served American citizens far better than TASS, *Pravda*, and *Izvestia* served the Russians.

To close on a personal note, I do not question the patriotism of other Americans—and I do not permit anyone to question mine. If we cannot have that as a basis for treating with one another, then we as a nation will have lost something that makes America what it is.

# Prospects For Military Reform

A. J. BACEVICH

Throughout history, military catastrophe has prodded defeated armies to reform themselves. An apparent irony of the decade following the catastrophic US failure in Vietnam is that the most vocal advocates of overhauling American military institutions have been not soldiers but civilians. Epitomizing this interest has been the so-called military reform movement, a loose coalition of Washington-based writers and consultants—Edward Luttwak, Jeffrey Record, William Lind, and Steven Canby, to name a few—along with political allies such as former Senator Gary Hart.

Diligently nonpartisan in the best tradition of politics stopping at the water's edge, these self-styled reformers claim—wrongly, as we shall see—that the military is incapable of reforming itself and that they alone can fix what's wrong with our military policies. They have seized the high ground in the contemporary debate over defense issues, calling for changes in the very framework of that debate. The reformers consider old questions such as how much to spend or how to reduce waste to be irrelevant. The real issue is *effectiveness*—getting a dollar's worth of capability for each dollar spent.

In terms of effectiveness, the reformers assess American military performance in recent years as sadly lacking. To illustrate that point, they have culled through the record of that performance since 1945, shrewdly emphasizing themes that have built-in appeal stemming from a lingering association with Vietnam: rampant military bureaucratization, the bankruptcy of efforts to quantify war, and all of that conflict's insidious excesses—too much firepower, too much equipment seldom suited for the job

at hand, and too many people rotating through the war zone with no clear idea of what they were about. Furthermore, the reformers emphasize, the causes of failure in Vietnam continue to plague the military today, forming part of an abiding and grossly defective American military tradition.

This notion of a single flawed military tradition stems from a misreading of American history, but is essential to the reformers' argument. Not in Vietnam alone, they say, has the American military shown a preference for wasteful and ineffective firepower-attrition tactics. Rather, American tactics as long ago as the Civil War and as recently as Grenada have consistently failed to take advantage of methods promising more decisive results at less cost. The style of leadership shown in Vietnam, according to the reformers, suggested deficiencies extending beyond the particular conditions of that war. The high command's preoccupation with statistical trends and analyses reflected a penchant to see war as an immense managerial problem. The practice of providing two or three layers of heliborne senior officers to "control" a small firefight on the ground illustrated the recurring American inability to grasp the advantages of decentralized execution. In the area of technology especially, the reformers ransack the record of Vietnam to point out other deeply rooted flaws. Throughout the war, the United States used gadgetry to try to make good its lack of a coherent strategy and pertinent tactics. Today, the reformers insist, the United States still puts its faith in technological sophistication to compensate for other shortcomings. The result, however, only makes things worse: the supreme importance attributed to efficient resource management leads Americans to neglect crucial intangibles such as cohesion and leadership.

The reformers insist that only a fundamental reorientation of our military policies can correct such deficiencies. To reverse the trend that has led soldiers increasingly to become bureaucrats and "bean counters," the reformers would reduce overstuffed headquarters. They would substitute an appreciation of history for misapplied concepts of systems analysis. And they would end the infatuation with technology of dubious utility in favor of a renaissance in military art—clarity of strategic purpose, simplicity in equipment and method, tactical competence, and a sensitivity to unquantifiable factors such as leadership, cohesion, and esprit.

The reformers have purveyed these as New Ideas. In consequence, they have attracted widespread attention from those inclined to receive

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uncritically anything with the appearance of innovation. Books by reformers are widely reviewed. Influential periodicals welcome their contributions. The reformers themselves appear frequently at defense-related symposia and on the networks, airing views that columnists and television commentators subsequently amplify. Ever prone to oversimplify, the media easily—almost reflexively—acquiesce in the reformers' efforts to depict "The Pentagon" as the heavy in the ongoing drama-debate over defense reform. By endorsing the reformers' portrait of a hidebound military establishment mired in bureaucracy and preoccupied with careerist goals, the media reinforce the notion that the military is beyond hope of reforming itself. As if by default, the reformers themselves control the field, apparently sole possessors of the wisdom required to correct the military's folly.

**Y**et, for all the ink and air time, the reform movement to date has achieved little. Although the reformers will likely remain fixtures in the constellation of experts hovering around official Washington, their prospects for achieving anything substantive appear increasingly remote.

There are several reasons for this. The most obvious stem from doubts about the reformers' credibility and from their abrasiveness in publicizing their views. Questions about credibility arise if only because of the sparseness of the reformers' firsthand military experience. More than a few have never served on active duty. Their expertise is largely of the self-taught variety. Although some observers might argue that clear thinking on military issues and immersion in military institutions are mutually exclusive, at some point—at least for some people—experience counts. In the eyes of such people, the reformers find themselves at a severe disadvantage. Officials who judge an argument on more than just cleverness of presentation are liable to dismiss the reformers as gifted amateurs. Military affairs resembles any other specialized field of endeavor in that respect: the views of those who lack the prerequisites for the priesthood will tend to be undervalued.

Compounding the problem is the reform movement's persistent inability to articulate remedies that can serve as concrete prescriptions for action. The strength of the movement lies in the skill with which its members dissect examples of military ineptitude layer by layer, exposing the whole in embarrassing detail. When it comes to proposing corrective action, however, such detail is not much in evidence. Reformers content themselves with prescriptions that are too elusive to offer practical help. In tactics, for example, as an alternative to the justly lambasted concept of firepower-attrition, the reformers support something they call maneuver warfare. The concept of maneuver is itself a slippery one that the reformers describe using terms such as elasticity, convergence, and relational movement.

But how does an army actually implement maneuver doctrine? Reformers answer that question by citing such things as the need for commanders endowed with *Fingerspitzengefühl* (an instinctive "feel" for battle); tactical agility derived from the use of "mission orders" (telling subordinates *what* to do but allowing them to figure out *how* to do it); and an emphasis on "getting inside" the enemy's "decision cycle" to bring about his progressive disorientation, paralysis, and ultimate collapse without the messiness of slugging it out toe-to-toe. As described by practiced reformers, maneuver warfare *sounds* altogether elegant. It makes battle intelligible by rising above the uncertainty and chaos that have marked the historical experience of armed conflict. The frictionless and uncluttered game board that is the reformers' battlefield allows commanders to survey the battle with omniscience and units to move with unerring precision. It is an irresistible picture.

Yet the most elementary efforts to move from theory to practice expose it as an unrealistic picture as well. Although peacetime exercises cannot replicate the fog of battle, they generate enough complexity and confusion to give any but the least perceptive soldier an appreciation of the challenges of combat command. Truly, nothing is easy in war. Although the theory of maneuver warfare may have merit, execution is fraught with difficulties for which glibness and suggestive phrases provide no antidote. The reformers' refusal to address such difficulties undermines the credibility of their overall critique.

Among military professionals, the manner in which reformers express their views exacerbates the tendency to give short shrift to reform proposals. Overstatement makes sense as a device for attracting media attention. Unfortunately, the verbal fireworks that score points on Op-Ed pages or television interviews also alienate military professionals, even reform-minded ones. The average corporal may find amusement in the deftness with which reformers skewer "The Pentagon." *He* is not being criticized. The generals and admirals who lead the services are inclined to feel themselves the butt of such attacks, however, and come to see reformers as adversaries rather than as a source of useful ideas. Thus, the combativeness so helpful in gaining media exposure also obstructs the creation of potential alliances between reformers and like-minded military professionals.

This ill-feeling would hardly matter if the reformers were correct in believing that the nation will acquire an effective military only when it *imposes* change upon the services, forcing them to abandon traditional bad habits. In fact, the likelihood of bringing about fundamental military reform without the consent and wholehearted cooperation of the services is nil. This error is crucial to the reformers' prospects: far more than suspect credentials or caustic rhetoric, this groundless faith in the feasibility of imposed change condemns the reformers to ineffectiveness.

The annual debate in Washington over defense spending should not obscure the extent to which the services today operate as autonomous, self-governing entities. Notwithstanding the careful scrutiny that the budget undergoes, large areas of military activity receive scant supervision. Indeed, many of the subjects that the reformers themselves point to as critical to genuine military effectiveness remain largely the preserve of the uniformed services. Each service answers for itself the critical questions of how to organize its forces, what weapons to develop, what tactics to employ, what personnel policies to adopt, and how to educate its officers and prepare its units for combat. In such matters, the services resist anything more than perfunctory oversight. Even when civilian officials make the effort to overcome that resistance, they seldom sustain the attention or master the detail needed to assume responsibility for the internal governance of the services.

The situation compares to the state's capacity to reform education. Government can build schools or close them. It can increase or reduce spending on education. It can mandate a curriculum and set competency standards for teachers. Despite all these efforts, the quality of education ultimately reflects the peculiar chemistry of a classroom, something beyond the effective reach of forces outside of the schoolhouse. So it is with the military: the factors essential to true military effectiveness will remain beyond the reach of those not in uniform.

**A** defense establishment wedded to a defective tradition that it will not abandon would seem to present insuperable difficulties to those who hope for improved military effectiveness. Yet the problem is an illusory one of the reform movement's own making. Upon closer examination, the reformers' assertion that the military cannot reform itself exposes itself as self-serving and unsubstantiated. In fact, the contention that the military is inescapably bound to its bad habits springs from a biased and one-sided reading of the past.

Despite a ritual emphasis on history, the reformers omit half the story. They are narrowly selective in choosing the evidence on which to base their critique. Although they build their case on indisputable elements of the American military tradition—perhaps even the dominant ones—the reformers err in overlooking the existence of a dissenting tradition, one that is no less important for being in the minority. For this alternative tradition represents the institutionalized resistance to precisely those tendencies that the reformers find objectionable.

What is the content of this alternative tradition? To a marked degree, it is a tradition that prefers the individual soldier to mass organization and that insists upon the primacy of man's role (over that of machines) in determining war's outcome. Best illustrating the substance of

this alternative tradition are the historical figures who have personified its character. Foremost among them is George S. Patton.

To judge by the successful movie of a decade ago, the popular view of Patton is that of a gifted commander who was also a monumental misfit. George C. Scott portrays Patton as an eccentric who is out of touch with the American character. His egomania and mysticism contrast unfavorably with the modest and benevolent Omar Bradley, as played by Karl Malden. For all of Patton's genius, it is Bradley who represents the proper American soldier. Because Patton can never conform to such a mold, his eventual fall from grace, if regrettable, seems foreordained.

Those within the military who look upon Patton as an exponent of the alternative tradition are untroubled by such ambivalence. Interested primarily in Patton the combat leader, they view his excesses as trivial in comparison with his achievements. As a commander, Patton symbolizes opposition to those forces—often condemned by the reformers—that threaten to displace traditional considerations so important to real military effectiveness. When others preached caution, Patton acted boldly. While too many of his wartime contemporaries were learning their profession at the expense of soldiers' lives, Patton stood out as a master of the military



General George S. Patton's mystique lives on. For many American soldiers, he remains the model of a combat leader.

art. And as other senior officers succumbed to the reassurances of reverential staffs and to decisionmaking by consensus, Patton insisted upon the inviolability of individual responsibility and the importance of personal leadership.

Patton was not the only American commander in World War II who exemplified those values. Forty years after the war, however, Patton alone among them retains a strong historical presence. Ironically, the other commanders of that era to whom American soldiers today look as models of the alternative tradition wore the uniform of our enemies—specifically the Germans.

The contrast is a striking one: apart from Patton, the Great Captains of America's World War II forces have little influence among their countrymen seeking instruction in the art of war today. Yet American students of war show an endless fascination for the campaigns and military leaders of the Third Reich. Even today, American soldiers look upon such leaders as von Manstein, Guderian, and Rommel as classic exemplars of the combat commander. The Battle of France, conceived by von Manstein and executed with an awesome skill attributed in large part to Guderian, remains among American soldiers the most admired operation in the annals of modern warfare. In an officer corps that is not notably well-read, familiarity with certain German war memoirs is all but mandatory. A dozen American officers study Rommel's *Attacks* for every one who even picks up Eisenhower's *Crusade in Europe* or MacArthur's *Reminiscences*.

What is the attraction? Judging the *Wehrmacht* strictly in military terms, American soldiers see in it qualities that US forces often lack. The *Wehrmacht's* operational—as distinct from its strategic—planning showed an uncanny knack for pitting German strength against critical enemy vulnerabilities. Even though the Germans often fought from a position of materiel inferiority, the ability of German commanders to grasp the essentials of combat led early in the war to a string of brilliant victories and later to a seemingly inexhaustible capacity to postpone defeat. Even toward the end of the war, German units did not quit, did not disintegrate, but fought on with startling effectiveness under conditions incomparably more trying than Americans would face in Vietnam.

Of course, just as Patton is not an ideal model for American soldiers in all respects, so too did the leaders of the *Wehrmacht* have their own ineradicable defects. Thus, not surprisingly, American attitudes regarding the *Wehrmacht* have been complex, so much so that respect for German military professionalism has not resulted in wholesale adoption of German methods. The range of those attitudes has combined feelings of inferiority with intense distaste—of frank admiration with self-reproach. It is the old story of the unprepossessing gentleman hopelessly in love with a beautiful woman who is, alas, a whore.



There is much to admire in the operational skills of such World War II German commanders as General Heinz Guderian.

Hoping to resolve such anomalies on the most favorable terms, some admirers have struggled to dissociate the *Wehrmacht* from National Socialism. Claims by favored German generals that they were apolitical and innocent of knowledge of war crimes receive easy acceptance. Evidence of Rommel's decency toward defeated foes and of his support for the plot against Hitler is played up to enhance his image as foremost among the "good" generals. However, these efforts have not prevailed before the weight of popular opinion that the *Wehrmacht* shares responsibility for Germany's conduct in World War II. This fact has obliged the American military until recently to keep its professional admiration for the *Wehrmacht* under wraps.

The alternative tradition has a literary side as well, one most often expressing itself through the medium of military journals. Each year, these journals publish a handful of dissenting articles, recognizable by their distinctive formula and their reliance on code words like "warrior" and "values" and "professionalism." "Warriors: An Endangered Species" is a recent example of this genre, of more than routine interest because its anonymous author, "Colonel Yasotay," is a general officer. Yasotay's article takes aim at personnel policies that he believes discriminate against combat arms officers while seducing them into becoming bureaucrats rather than fighters. Yasotay devotes much of his article to railing against a promotion system designed, implemented, and still controlled by "paper shufflers" for their own benefit at the expense of combat leaders and the Army's overall fighting ability. He decries the practice of sending doctors,

lawyers, and dentists to highly competitive tactical schools out of a misplaced concern for equity. Thanks to the dominance of the bureaucratic mentality, complains Yasotay, "we have become an Army of clerks, not killers." To correct the problem, he wants to restore the warrior to his traditional status and to structure personnel policies to favor and advance those who will actually lead soldiers into battle.

In raw form, such views suggest a wistful yearning for a past long since destroyed by the forces of the modern world. Even so, it is wrong simply to dismiss Yasotay as reactionary. Taken as a whole, the written record of the alternative tradition contains much of relevance to the current debate over military reform. Nowhere is this clearer than with the writings of Brigadier General S. L. A. Marshall, the journalist and military historian. Marshall's many works take as their common theme what he called the "human factor" in battle. Notwithstanding the military's habitual emphasis on formal organization, doctrine, and hardware, Marshall argues that the outcome of combat seldom turns on any of these. Through his study of innumerable combat actions, Marshall concluded that the keys to victory lay in the quality of an army's leadership and the fighting spirit of its soldiers. His *Men Against Fire*, published in 1947 and still in print, remains the best book by an American about the psychology of battle. The book's chapters reflect Marshall's concerns: "Combat Isolation," "Tactical Cohesion," "The Aggressive Will," and "Why Men Fight." Marshall criticized Americans for paying too little attention to such matters. Throughout the period between World War II and Vietnam, he served as an unofficial conscience of the services, upbraiding them for flirting with doctrinal fads and gimmicky weapons, insisting always upon the primacy of the human element in war. If his influence was seldom decisive, Marshall's status as a critic who was also an insider guaranteed him a hearing and insured that his views would survive the passing of their author.

**W**hat is the condition of this alternative tradition today? Does it have any substance beyond cranky literary mutterings and hero-worship for deceased generals of flawed reputation? Can the critique fashioned by the alternative tradition provide a realistic blueprint for change leading to improved military effectiveness?

The evidence suggests that the alternative tradition has acquired new strength in the years since Vietnam. One factor contributing to that strength has been a reassessment of the German military model. So long as attempts to separate the *Wehrmacht* from National Socialism remained exclusively a military undertaking, they lacked the necessary disinterestedness to be persuasive. Recently, however, German and American military performance in World War II has been subjected to impartial

scholarly comparison. Two books have been especially important: *Eisenhower's Lieutenants* by Russell F. Weigley,<sup>1</sup> a well-known historian at Temple University, and *Fighting Power* by Martin van Creveld,<sup>2</sup> a lecturer at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Weigley's massively documented retelling of the campaigns in western Europe from Normandy through V-E Day illustrates in detail the mediocrity of American generalship—Patton being a notable exception—in comparison with the *Wehrmacht's* high standard of excellence. Neither Weigley nor van Creveld seeks excuses for the *Wehrmacht's* support of Hitler or its involvement in war crimes. Both clearly show, however, that the *Wehrmacht's* proficiency in the conduct of combat operations stemmed not from Nazi fanaticism or brutality, but from an unrivaled understanding of war that pervaded all aspects of the German military machine: how it trained units, selected leaders, educated staffs, and so on down to the smallest detail of who got promoted and decorated and how depleted units were reconstituted. While the Americans approached war as if it were a gigantic industrial enterprise like digging the Panama Canal, the Germans subordinated everything to the creation of units with maximum fighting ability. The principles that van Creveld cites as guiding the German effort—the emphasis on intangibles such as unit cohesion, the importance attributed to leadership, the determination to shield combat units from the weight of bureaucratic requirements—echo those that the alternative American tradition has long advocated. Van Creveld's analysis is important not for unearthing anything new but for demonstrating conclusively how the single-minded application of principles *already* known can produce a superior fighting force. By attributing the *Wehrmacht's* much-respected combat effectiveness to such principles (instead of to Nazism), Weigley and van Creveld invest the principles with increased authority and impart greater legitimacy to the German model.

Some might question how much practical impact a pair of scholarly works is likely to have. That both are already regarded as classics proves little. A proper evaluation of their importance may be possible only in retrospect, years from now. Clearly, however, the two books mark a turning point in military historiography that is of more than scholarly interest. By explaining the limitations of American military performance in terms that soldiers find persuasive and by lending credence to views long held by advocates of the alternative tradition, Weigley and van Creveld provide an intellectual backdrop hitherto lacking in the cause of reform within the military.

Beyond fresh scholarship, there are substantive indicators of the alternative tradition's strength. In the Army especially, recent changes in doctrine and officer education bear the tradition's imprint.

One important example is AirLand Battle, the operational doctrine adopted by the Army in 1982 and refined last year.<sup>5</sup> Outside of the military, AirLand Battle has attracted attention due to the *political* implications of "deep attacks" against enemy "second echelon" forces. Yet, whatever its significance, deep attack is by no means the most important feature of AirLand Battle. From a broad perspective, AirLand Battle is noteworthy because it signifies the abandonment of the evolutionary path that doctrine has followed since World War II. Although the Army is uncomfortable describing it as such, AirLand Battle represents a fundamental departure from the service's usual tactical style. Moreover, the course that AirLand Battle lays out incorporates several elements of the alternative tradition. The language of FM 100-5, *Operations*, the Army's basic how-to-fight manual, reflects this point. The manual downplays the importance of materiel considerations, noting that in deciding the result of any battle, "intangible factors often predominate." Elsewhere, the manual locates the source of "superior combat power" not in weapons or tactics but in "the courage of soldiers, the excellence of their training, and the quality of their leadership." The authors of FM 100-5 are also critical of firepower-attrition, which they view simply as an excessive reliance on materiel manifested in tactics. The manual comes down clearly in favor of tactics emphasizing initiative, flexibility, and decentralized execution. Woven through the text is an image of war as a uniquely complex, dynamic, and unpredictable phenomenon. The authors of the manual shy away from rules and procedures, implying that victory comes not from formulas, but from innovation, imagination, and adaptability summoned in the midst of battle.

In an ideal army, military education contributes to the development of such qualities in soldiers. Here, too, the recent strength of the alternative tradition has had its effect. The Army's new School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) at Fort Leavenworth grew out of dissatisfaction at the inability of existing schools to educate officers in the broader aspects of their profession. Even those Army schools that tried to provide something more than technical training generally failed. SAMS enables selected combat arms graduates of the Command and General Staff College to spend a second year not memorizing the details of how to assemble the defense budget, but studying war itself. The curriculum's seminars, research projects, and extensive readings in history focus on how to win campaigns in the field rather than in the corridors of the Pentagon.

Yet even an enthusiast of the alternative tradition must view these developments as hopeful rather than decisive. To be sure, the AirLand Battle and SAMS show that the alternative tradition is now strong enough not only to criticize the status quo but to affect it. However encouraging that may be, the forces that the alternative tradition aims to dislodge remain firmly entrenched. Even the success of these two experiments is not assured.

Although AirLand Battle has been official doctrine for four years, the process of applying its tenets to what units actually do in the field is still incomplete. Some commanders instinctively oppose any change and continue to base their tactical thinking on that ageless principle: "the way we've always done it." Others embrace AirLand Battle without understanding it. They adopt the appropriate buzzwords, but the *substance* of how their units train or operate remains essentially unaltered. These problems should eventually be overcome, but in the meantime the institutional acceptance of AirLand Battle will remain fragile.

Likewise, as it now exists, SAMS is hardly more than a pilot project. Until the school establishes itself as a permanent part of the landscape of Army education, its survival will depend on the goodwill of a handful of sympathetic generals. For the moment, the existence of SAMS signifies not that reform in military education has triumphed but that the need for reform has been recognized.

Over 30 years ago, the historian T. Harry Williams made a notable attempt to categorize American generals into two distinct traditions: the Macs and the Ikes.<sup>4</sup> The Ike tradition belonged to leaders whose military accomplishments blended with attractive personal qualities to give them nationwide popularity. The general in the Ike tradition "was Mars, but he could also have been Uncle Ned, sitting in the parlor talking to the children." He respected civilian authority, stayed on good terms with the administration in Washington, and scrupulously avoided partisan politics. At the end of his military career, he sought only quiet retirement. If induced to run for office, he did so less because of any ideological axe to grind than in response to a popular clamor that he lead the country. He was the model of the democratic soldier: successful in war, but at root unmilitaristic and fiercely protective of basic national principles.

The general in the Mac tradition lacked the folksiness and common touch to win such popularity. He was distant and aristocratic, even Olympian. "He could never have been Uncle Ned," wrote Williams. "If he had come in the parlor, everybody would have been embarrassed and would have stood up, waiting for him to utter an Important Pronouncement." This type of general considered himself intellectually superior to his civilian masters. He quarrelled with them often and did not hesitate to make these disagreements public. He coveted the Presidency, but despite his brilliance and his victories he never became a serious contender. The people respected him as a gifted soldier, but they did not trust him.

Williams' paradigm concerned itself not with war, but with civil-military relations, in particular the principle of civilian control. In 1952, his perspective possessed a special timeliness. The archetypal Mac still hovered on the fringes of American politics after having been relieved the previous

year for defying his civilian commander-in-chief. At the same time, the namesake of the Ikes was campaigning to *become* commander-in-chief. Williams was telling his countrymen that they were right to be wary of the threat that militarism posed to American democracy. At the same time, he offered reassurance that there also existed soldiers of a more benign character to whom Americans need not hesitate to entrust their democracy.

For Americans in the present day, Williams' formulation has lost its meaning. Today, it is inconceivable that any serving officer would challenge civilian authority as Douglas MacArthur did. It is scarcely more conceivable that any serving officer might run successfully for the presidency. This comparative absence of civil-military contentiousness in the post-Vietnam period has allowed the military debate to focus where it should: on questions of competence and effectiveness. Yet the recent past may yield its own dual tradition of officership, one as pertinent to the questions we face today as the Ikes and Macs were for the 1950s. As prototypes for that tradition we might nominate the Massengales and the Damons.

Courtney Massengale and Sam Damon are the protagonists in Anton Myrer's novel of 20-century military life, *Once An Eagle*.<sup>7</sup> Published in 1968 just as the Army's Vietnam-induced anguish was about to reach its zenith, Myrer's book made up in timeliness what it lacked in literary merit. For many officers, *Once An Eagle* became a handbook on how the Army had gone astray in Southeast Asia.

Courtney Massengale—the very name somehow suggesting a sycophantic careerist—symbolizes the corruption of the officer corps. His style is that of the corporate manager: well-groomed and well-spoken, more at ease in the world of briefings and statistic-laden charts than with weapons and tactics. Massengale is a sophisticate, attuned to trends and to politics, whether inside the military or beyond, and sensitive to the media's power to affect events and people, not least of all himself. In short, his image is that of the quintessential staff officer.

In contrast to Massengale's smooth-talking politician-bureaucrat, Sam Damon is a fighter with mud on his boots. As depicted by Myrer, Damon is something of a rube, but he has integrity, an asset that Massengale sold off to get his first promotion. Damon represents a school of officership that values directness, common sense, and candor. He feels at ease with soldiers and thus prefers duty in the field to service in even the most prestigious staff billet. Absorbed by war, he devotes himself to mastering the skills essential to combat rather than to office politics or public relations. His is the tradition of the warrior and troop leader.

Just as T. Harry Williams' portrayal of the Macs and the Ikes failed to do justice to the complexities of MacArthur and Eisenhower, so too the use of Massengale and Damon as paradigms for the officer corps may

suffer from oversimplification. Like Williams, however, our intent is not to dwell on detail but to highlight a larger truth.

Ignored by the reform movement, forces within the services vie today to determine the evolving identity of the military establishment. Although the Vietnam War exposed to full view the flaws of the Massengale tradition, other factors—not least the very size of the military and the national bias toward bureaucratic management and high technology—keep that tradition alive. Indeed, the fabric of military life has become so deeply imbued with aspects of the Massengale tradition that no officer can escape its influence altogether.

Despite that pervasiveness, the prospects for reform from *within* the military are auspicious. The strength of the Damon tradition is growing. We see its reflection in scholarship, doctrine, and military education. More important, we sense it in the legendary stature of those flesh-and-blood soldiers who embody the qualities of the fictional Damon—men such as Patton, Matthew B. Ridgway, and Creighton W. Abrams. These men—and others less well known, but cast from the same mold—today constitute the preeminent model of professionalism, influencing thousands of younger officers. In the end, that influence may well be the most powerful of all the forces favoring reform.

The final outcome of the struggle between the Massengales and the Damons remains to be seen. This much is certain, however: genuine military effectiveness will improve to the extent that the Damons continue to thrive. Those who support the cause of military reform can best contribute to that goal by encouraging those inside the military whose views they find compatible. Yet in doing so, they should expect to make no more than a marginal contribution. In the end, the American military will reform itself or it will not reform at all.

#### NOTES

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5. US Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual 100-3 (Washington: GPO, 1982). An updated edition was published in 1986.
6. T. Harry Williams, "The Macs and the Ikes," *American Mercury*, 75 (October 1952), 32-39.
7. Anton Myrer, *Once an Eagle* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

# Intelligence Failures and the Limits of Logic

RALPH PETERS

One of our prime cultural biases is the assumption that all things are knowable, and that we have only to get the numbers right to predict the sum of anything. We live in a century of mathematics, and the splendor of science has been enriched to depths beyond our common capability to understand. Hardly a century ago, Tennyson coaxed Romantic over-achievers "To follow knowledge like a sinking star, Beyond the utmost bound of human thought." But, already, our "knowledge" of the universe, assisted by the computer's ability to speed through calculations that far outstrip the power of pencil or chalk, has, literally, out-reached the grasp of Newtonian thought. We know so much that we cannot fully know all that we know.

Then how can it not be frustrating, to a civilization that grapples with the physics of a black hole, to be constantly surprised by the misbehavior of less-credentialed cultures just a comfortable jet flight from home? In a universe where all is tacitly assumed to be knowable—and we still retain that 19th-century conceit, though we dress it in more somber colors—it seems obvious that *someone* must have failed when we choke on our morning coffee at the totally unexpected news reports just in from the Third World.

The Shah of Shahs falls off the pedestal we paid good money to erect for him, and our recent allies, the Iranian people, start calling us all sorts of imaginative names. An increasingly robust Mexican economy receives a bonus infusion of petrodollars only to develop, without warning, the financial equivalent of AIDS in less than a decade. We spend our best available minds to construct painstakingly detailed assessments of what clever moves the Soviets will make next, only to have the Empire of Evil

(Empire of Mediocrity?) embarrass us by doing something colossally stupid or clumsy rather than breathtakingly insidious. As of this writing, we are scrambling to calculate future events ranging from the internal evolution of Haiti to the counter-SDI structure of Soviet strategic forces. And, despite our very best, most conscientious efforts, we are bound to get a great deal of it wrong—added to which high drama will likely unfold in exactly that area of the world we are momentarily ignoring.

And the press, and the opposition, and the citizen who just read a three-month-old news magazine in his dentist's waiting room, will cry, "Intelligence failure!"

As a ten-year veteran of the discipline of intelligence analysis, I have some bad news for the already choleric taxpayer: a broad range of "intelligence failure:" remains inevitable. But, on a considerably less dramatic level, there is some hope—we *could* do a bit better than we have done in the recent past.

We must, however, take a hard look at the intellectual architecture currently popular within the best neighborhoods of the intelligence community (where the pilgrim encounters an abundance of prefabricated constructions with impressive facades, multiple stories, and not a few condominiums). An honest appraisal is apt to conclude with the judgment that we have built for display, and not to last. Certainly, there are problems with the sewage.

Our most obnoxious assumption—and one that has been painfully disproven over and over again—is that the dynamics of human social and political behavior are thoroughly quantifiable. Masquerading as true contemporary scholarship, this approach to analysis is really just high-tech numerology. Numbers *are* genuinely useful to the discriminating analyst, in such forms as production statistics, demographic projections, strategic transport capacities, and even public opinion polls. But numbers lose a great deal of their magical power when they must deal with human emotions (otherwise mathematicians would get all the girls). Numbers are the purest form of logical expression. But much of human nature is decidedly illogical—emotionally, rather than analytically, driven. Much of human behavior remains practically "incalculable" even in retrospect. Our common history is punctuated with frightful excesses that can only be understood on an intuitive, emotional level, and each new generation is

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fated to shake its collective head at the past, muttering, "How could they have done that?"

The hapless intelligence analyst, on the other hand, does not have to wait for the passing of the generations to cry "How could they have done that?" He has only to wait for the next embarrassment of his solemn predictions. Thus in this one respect, at least, intelligence professionals seem to be ahead of their time.

**A** wonderful paradigm for the limits of logic in analyzing human behavior can be drawn by briefly considering the enduring appeal of doctrinaire Communism. First of all, the one major philosophical-political system that is most obviously—if often only textually—tied to logical determinism is Marxism-Leninism. Yet this system has had mostly a rawly romantic appeal to men. While Capitalism bluntly prefers facts to ideas, Communism deals shamelessly in dreams. Communism, in its various mutations, continues to dumbfound rational Westerners with its ability to capture new adherents even though it has nowhere produced the promised results.

The witchery is that Communism never runs out of promises. Often dreadful in its reality, Communism has nonetheless produced the first enduring secular *vision* of Utopia. Capitalism deals stubbornly, and often irritably, in the problems of today; Communism simply promises that those problems will go away if only the faithful believe. Millennial in its essence, Communism is well suited to fill the vacuum left by religion in the secular age—especially in suddenly disrupted traditionalist societies. Our Western statesmen, in all of their intellectual grandeur, have rarely grasped the simple fact that Capitalism has no mechanism to appeal to the truly hopeless. Communism recognizes and exploits the fact that most men would rather die for a beautiful lie than for an ugly truth. Addressing the wretched poor of the Third World, Capitalism raises the prospect of minimum-wage jobs for the next generation. Communism shamelessly promises salvation, power, and revenge.

Yet, ultimately, even Communism with its rhetorical totems is only a catalyst for latent emotional powers—the human heritage of rage that cannot be quantified. Communism is the flag of convenience for the spiritually dispossessed. To espouse Communism is to admit that one has not only run out of practical ideas, but that one has chosen a sort of secular martyrdom. And the speeches that drone on for hours in Havana, Kim il-Sung's parables of himself, and the nervous visions of Daniel Ortega really bear more similarity to primitive religious litanies than to efficient tools of government.

In the short novel *Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad offers a stunning image of a 19th-century gunboat attempting to shell a primitive

continent.<sup>2</sup> It is, among other things, an image of the futility of attempting to impose techno-civilization on the wildness at the heart of mankind. We analysts pecking away at our second-rate computers, attempting to quantify the future of a world much of which is merely chaos artificially structured to ease postal delivery, often resemble that puffing little gunboat in both our hubris and our accomplishment.

Less than a generation ago, we spoke blithely of "winning the hearts and minds" of the populations of developing countries. Today, the best analysts have retreated to merely trying to understand the minds—even though political, social, and economic behavior may actually arise more from the "heart," from the anti-rational possibilities lurking within those foreign, foreign figures who so often seem to make monkeys of us all.

We study hard. We read the best texts, listen dutifully to the acknowledged experts, and strive honestly to grasp the future's single possible course in our estimates. We seek right thought and correct action. But, in our intellectual (often merely educational) pride, we limit ourselves needlessly, willfully closing our eyes to the facts that do not fit our pre-determined interpretation of the world. We do not really analyze foreign peoples. Instead, we simply revisit our own educations. For every intelligence analyst who seeks to probe that "heart of darkness" that is the future, there seem to be a thousand who are content to remember what they once were told, to spruce up classroom formulae with contemporary dates and names.

But no people can be truly known (if, indeed, a people can be known at all) merely through the analysis of their gross national product, physical environment, political, military, and overt social establishments, and other relatively quantifiable aspects, since charts, graphs, and tables can neither encompass nor tether human desires. All of the above is indispensable, and yet it is nothing more than the requisite background information.

We take the easy way out (although even this demands a formidable amount of work), characterizing the foreign citizen in terms of what he earns, eats, wears, and how he votes (with either ballot or gun). We consider his religious, tribal, and family loyalties. We gather statistics on his prisons, press, and fleets. We count his Mercedes in one column and his oxcarts in another. We know the type and amount of fertilizer he uses, and the type and amount he should use. But we shy at reaching into the man himself.

Certainly the partially quantifiable inability of a man to feed his family or treat their diseases highlights obvious vulnerabilities in the sociopolitical system that arches over his worried life. But if you want to know what excites a man to action, and just how volatile that action may ultimately be, you must try, while being prepared to fail over and over again, to identify that for which he *yearns*.

Our vocabulary has grown cold. We fear the effect of words that might infect our scholarly prose with the cancer of emotion. We sincerely believe (since we have been repeatedly assured) that any book on Latin America that bears the imprint of an established university press has more to teach us about those dumbfoundingly foreign people south of the Rio Grande than does the fiction of Gabriel Garcia Márquez. We read the professors. Castro reads Garcia Márquez.

Overall, it is the misfortune of the analyst that the mobs and strong men who intermittently convulse the Third World rarely bother to study the rules that American and European academics prescribe for them. Their ingratitude toward our efforts at corralling their destinies within our theories is so boundless that they occasionally just do what they *feel*. It is the stuff of quickening headlines and governmental dismay.

As analysts, we know the theories of economic assistance and the infrastructure problems related to chronic underdevelopment. We have thoroughly described the problems and even constructed marvelous abstract models to solve them. And we are by no means dummies. Yet, we fail resoundingly. At the risk of some well-intentioned wooliness, I think it might be otherwise. We have to open our minds, which an inbred educational system has closed at least to the degree of Albanian society.

The price of bauxite on the world market is a factor critical to the well-being of the Jamaican economy. But knowing that price and its impact on state debt really does not help us understand the inner workings and dreams of the average Jamaican down in the parishes. Nonetheless, a Caribbean analyst will shut himself up behind economic indices when he must project the long-term prospects for continued democracy in Jamaica. I would urge him to make just a little time in his schedule to listen to recent Jamaican music, for an incandescent artist such as the late Bob Marley can make the aching and slow fury of the young unemployed Jamaican more vivid and knowable than an entire book on bauxite.



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Bob Marley was awarded Jamaica's Order of Merit for his contributions to the nation's culture. His lyrics tell us more about his countrymen than any economic indicator can.

It is genuinely hard to understand why academic disciplines such as political science and international relations are so anxious to distance themselves from popular art forms. After all, one of the keynotes of successful art is that it encapsulates or translates vivid commonalities. Art permits a *visceral understanding*, without which the study of foreign peoples must remain incomplete.

An example of the political maturity and insight available in contemporary art forms is the relationship of V. S. Naipaul's novel *Guerrillas* to the Grenada rescue operation.<sup>3</sup> Writing in the decade before our intervention, Naipaul essentially modeled the internal political scenario that would later emerge in Grenada (although Grenada was not his subject) and "solved" the model with US military helicopters. When I encountered the book shortly after its publication, I dismissed it as one of Naipaul's lesser works—too much artifice. Mr. Naipaul, I have learned my lesson.

We are too proud. While we should not—dare not—dispense with scholarly rigor, we must develop corollary approaches to sampling the lifeblood of other peoples. At the very least, we must recognize that there is possible value in alternative methodologies—including the willingness to trust mature intuition even unsupported by statistics. The trick, if there is one, is to master the art of empathizing without being co-opted into the other's system of beliefs.

Good analysis is, then, largely a matter of what the poet Keats called "negative capability," the ability to assimilate dualities without creating conflict within oneself that hopelessly muddles everything.<sup>4</sup> This is very, very hard. But it is worth the effort. In any case, it offers more hope of a partial remedy to our "intelligence failure" disease than does the current practice of examining the slums and villages of the Third World from university offices—or from international chain hotels in the capital city, where we fear the water and the waiter's touch.

**W**e are marginally better at analyzing the Soviets than at figuring out the Third World, if only because Soviet studies occupy so much of our effort. But we repeatedly do needlessly badly when we negotiate with them just because we do not really see them as human beings. This is especially pronounced in the area of military intelligence, where we tend to regard the "Russian" as a characterless thing that drives a tank. And yet the Russian character is so culturally rich that the world of music and literature continues to shimmer with its enduring contributions. This dehumanizing of the Russian (or Soviet in general), based largely upon our own naivety, fears, and a bit of intellectual sloth, is not only costly at the negotiating table and in our insomnia-remedy intelligence estimates, it is both dangerous and debasing to ourselves.

It is dangerous because it prevents us from understanding these people who are, tragically but frankly, our collective opponents for the

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*"In war, it is easier to defeat the opponent you understand than it is to fight an enigma."*

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present. And, in war, it is easier to defeat the opponent you essentially understand than it is to fight an enigma. Further, our inability to grasp the Soviet military hierarchy as a structure of living individuals with personal differences in talents, visions, and experience renders our intelligence evaluations disarmingly superficial and stupidly dehumanized ("The impact of 30 percent attrition on the second operational echelon equates to . . ." and so on). As an intelligence analyst, I can presently tell the decisionmaker precisely how many tanks an enemy formation has, but very little about that formation's commander. As a soldier, I would settle for a very approximate figure on tank strength if I could know the essence of the enemy commander as a man.

Our approach is debasing to us because it lulls our humanity to sleep. We, as a people, were at our moral worst during the Chernobyl disaster, gloating with unabashed *schadenfreude* at an event that visited far more harm on average Soviet men, women, and children than it inflicted on their stable, if somewhat embarrassed, government. Our loss of perspective appears grotesque. While the Soviet government is implacably the enemy of the United States, the individual working man in Kiev has full claim on my sympathy until he picks up a gun.

But will taking a more ecumenical approach to the background research for estimative intelligence solve the problems described above? Will watching a succession of Indian popular films enable us to accurately predict the future of the subcontinent?

Of course not. But most human progress comes in increments, and a trifle more open-mindedness may bring marginal—but meaningful—improvement in our intelligence capability. The blindingly obvious recognition that eccentric human decisionmaking may at least partially determine the course of human events would certainly help. And we could definitely profit by stepping back from our pretension that there is but one predestined and fully knowable future. The future, except to the spiritually boorish, is incomparably rich in alternatives. The best analysts I am privileged to know rarely stand up and state categorically that such and such will definitely happen just so (although there is a time for this, too). Rather, they "wargame" various options, some of which *must* be highly imaginative if we are to receive good value for our efforts. Even this process can degenerate into a form of playing it safe—deluging the decisionmaker with a list of every possible option, thereby abdicating all real responsibility. But at

its best, this earnest pursuit of tomorrow's deepest secrets can become an intellectual endeavor worthy of our nation.

And we will always get some of it wrong. By this statement, I do not mean to convey defeatism—on the contrary, this essential realization can be positively liberating to the analyst struggling to mature in a suffocatingly closed system. We *will* always get some of it wrong. So let us do our best to get as much of it right as possible, recognizing that much remains unpredictable, except by lucky guess, in a world where a single bullet still has the power to alter the course of nations.

On the positive side, intelligence analysis that perseveres in an endeavor to *understand* rather than merely explain (or make requirements go away) may reveal previously unimagined opportunities to shape the future advantageously to ourselves. After all, the future—logically—must be at least as malleable as the past, and a skillful historian can make of the past nearly anything he wishes. The fundamental purpose of today's intelligence effort is to achieve future advantage—winning the future.

I wish I could offer upbeat hopes for immediate progress. Unfortunately, current trends are more worrisome than they are encouraging. The intelligence community seems determined to find a formula for everything. Partly because so many of the nation's best minds are going to the private sector rather than into the government's various intelligence services, there is a nervous trend toward reducing intelligence analysis to a matter of quantifiables even more so than it is now. Yet, the qualities that are most lacking in our efforts refuse to be quantified. Perhaps, one day, Artificial Intelligence will master empathy, imagination, and mature intuition. But it is unlikely to occur this fiscal year.

Our desperate need is to achieve balance, recognizing that a properly integrated intelligence effort requires minds and talents both practical and imaginative—some technically oriented, at least a few eccentrically visionary. The penalty, if we continue to reduce intelligence more and more to a logic that is increasingly limited to expression in integers, is that we will experience not fewer but more intelligence "failures." I believe the United States intelligence community has, at least for the present, reached the limits of logic. Rather than continuing to examine bodies of men in numbing detail, we need now to explore their souls.

#### NOTES

1. Alfred Tennyson, "Ulysses," in *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. Christopher Ricks (London: Longman, Green, 1969), p. 564.

2. Joseph Conrad, "Heart of Darkness," in *Great Modern Short Stories*, ed. Bennett Cerf (Random House, 1942), p. 18.

3. V. S. Naipaul, *Gunnarsson* (New York: Knopf, 1975).

4. John Keats, the English Romantic poet, coined the term "negative capability," defining it as the capability "of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason" (A. F. Scott, *Current Literary Terms* [New York: St. Martin's, 1963], p. 192).

# *Truly* Learning the Operational Art

JOHN E. TURLINGTON

*"For me as a soldier, the smallest detail caught on the spot and in the heat of action is more instructive than all the Thiers and the Jominis in the world." — Ardant du Picq'*

**I**f operational art is as important to successful warfighting as our leaders and schools say it is, and if operational art is to be learned in the manner that it is now being taught, then I believe, as the saying goes, "You can't get there from here."

There is no criticism intended. On the contrary, the reintroduction, after many years in the closet, of operational art and the concept of an operational level of war points to a renaissance in the Army's attention to warfighting doctrine. Nowhere is the renaissance more pronounced than in the curricula of our staff and war colleges and in the pages of our professional journals. One has only to look at the tables of contents of recent journals to see the proliferation of thoughtful, challenging, and in some cases visionary articles on the subjects of military strategy and doctrine.

## ***Field Manual 100-5, Operations***

The seminal work of the revolution in doctrine (some might say evolution, but it does not matter which) is the 1982 version of Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, the Army's statement of its AirLand Battle doctrine—

how it will fight and win in war. What is revolutionary is the concept of the operational level of war. It is certainly not new in world military history, nor is it new in American military history. But you have to look back more than thirty years to find it, so it is new to the current generation of officers whose rapidly waning warfighting experience is confined to the tactical victories and strategic defeat of Vietnam.

Just what exactly is "operational art"? It is the expertise required of a leader and his staff to fight successfully at the campaign level of war. The 1986 revision of FM 100-5 does a much better job of definition than the 1982 version. It says, in part, that "operational art is the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations." FM 100-5 describes three levels of war—strategic, operational, and tactical. Military strategy is derived from national policy, establishing goals, providing resources, and imposing constraints to secure policy objectives through the application or threat of force. Operational art involves the skillful translation of strategic goals into achievable military objectives and the subsequent planning, positioning, and maneuvering of forces to achieve those objectives. It is the bringing, normally, of field armies and larger forces to bear at the appropriate time and place on the battlefield to impose our will on the enemy. Tactics is the skillful employment of forces, normally corps and lower, to fight those battles at the place and time the operational art has dictated.

Operational art is the link between strategy and fighting battles. It is what gives substance to strategy and meaning to the loss of life and materiel inevitable on the battlefield. It is the highest purely military activity in the three levels of war. It is Alexander the Great in Persia and Hannibal in Italy. It is Genghis Khan in Asia and Gustavus Adolphus at Breitenfeld. It is Frederick the Great at Leuthen and Napoleon at Austerlitz. It is Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley and Moltke at Königgratz. It is Rommel in North Africa and MacArthur at Inchon. All of these great captains conducted campaigns that were, in their time, decisive. All were masters of the operational art.

Operational art is what wins wars and is what the profession of arms is all about. It is an art the citizens of our country pay us, in the interest of national security, to apply with skill in wartime. I do not of course mean to sell short the value of tactics. Without good soldiers, well equipped, well

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led, and well supported in good combat units, skill in operational art will count for nothing. Moreover, in this writer's opinion at least, the ability to fight at the tactical level is this country's strong suit. We have good soldiers who are well equipped and well led. There is room for improvement in all aspects of the tactical level of war, obviously, but on the whole our Army has great tactical strength. It has always been a part of our doctrine, and has always received the most emphasis.

In a recent *Parameters* article titled "Training for the Operational Level," Lieutenant Colonel L. D. Holder says, "Over the years we have watched operational levels of command disappear. Commanders . . . have let our joint training programs slip almost out of existence."<sup>3</sup> Tactical jobs were more desirable than higher-level assignments, and joint operational assignments were treated with disdain by officers with the greatest demonstrated potential. "Our schools have not troubled themselves too much with campaign studies until very lately, nor have we made time for or encouraged professional reading in large unit operations in the officer corps. In sum, we have to recover a lot of ground before we can convert the ideals of doctrine into a real operational capability."<sup>4</sup>

#### *Current Approaches to Teaching the Operational Art*

If operational art is as important to winning as FM 100-5 says it is, and if FM 100-5 is "the most important doctrinal manual in the Army"<sup>5</sup> as former TRADOC commander General William R. Richardson claims it is, then surely one of the vital questions facing Army leadership today should be: How do we teach operational art to our officers? True, recent graduates of the staff and war colleges can provide a very good definition of the operational art. Moreover, they can cite the operational principles, which are the same as those for tactics. They can probably cite in some detail the example of MacArthur at Inchon as a classic of the operational art in action. Selected students at the School of Advanced Military Studies get even more on the subject. But the Army correctly recognizes that such schoolhouse history and theory is not enough, and so it encourages self-study. A special Army War College text, titled *Operational Level of War—Its Art* and distributed throughout the Army last year, proffers the following advice: "There are not enough hours in our duty days in our various jobs nor formalized schooling to master the vastness [of the] art of war. Thus, our only recourse must be through a self-education process."<sup>6</sup> Professional reading is the implied principal vehicle for this "self-education" process.

But if the Army's goal is, as it should be, to institutionalize competence in the operational level of war, then the question becomes, Will voluntary participation in some kind of self-education program accomplish the goal? I say no, but let us develop this argument a little further. Assume for the sake of discussion the best case—that all field-grade officers are

highly self-motivated to teach themselves the real art of the operational level of war, how does the Army propose they go about it? General Richardson says we do it by "thoroughly and systematically searching military history while simultaneously scanning the future for new technology and new concepts." Colonel Holder says we do it "only through mastery of military history and theory." He goes on to add that "the individual responsibility for this development will continue throughout the officer's career." I could not agree more with both of these visionary officers. The disconnect comes between what they say and what the Army is doing.

### *Toward a Better Approach*

The operative words from General Richardson and Colonel Holder are, it seems to me, "systematically searching" and "mastery." Let's return now to the Army War College's special text on the operational level of war and its invitation to master that subject through self-study. Suppose that all field-grade officers spend the prodigious amounts of non-duty time required to study systematically and master this book of 364 pages and all of its future editions. Will the US Army have in, say, five years a group of operational-level officers skilled in the art? The answer I believe is no. We will certainly have a corps of officers who are more widely read and articulate in military matters. Their perspectives will be broader; their depth of understanding and clarity of vision will be enhanced. They will be better officers and even better operators, but they will not have learned, really learned, the operational art. These officers will have studied a mile-wide field to a depth of one inch, maybe a foot. It is my belief, however, that real learning of the art will take place only through inch-wide, mile-deep study.

A dust-covered book found in the Military History Institute will help illustrate my point. The title of the book is *The Franco-German Campaign of 1870*. It is a "source book" printed by the US General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, in 1922. The book contains over 700 pages of translations of the actual documents, maps, charts, and messages of both the combatants. The material deals only with the planning and execution of movements of corps, armies, and army groups. Tactical material was omitted. With this book, it is possible in a week of intense work to realistically reconstruct the critical opening weeks of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. It is possible to cast yourself alternately in the roles of the opposing commanders to see the situation as they saw it. You see only the fragments of the often conflicting information available to the commander at the time crucial decisions were made. You know the state of training and morale of your soldiers, their weapons capabilities, your logistic constraints, the capabilities of subordinate commanders. You know the enemy and the terrain. In other words, with work, and a lot of it, you can get inside the mind of the commanders, see the situation about as it confronted them,

and make judgments as to what you should or should not do. The object is to train your intuition and your instincts.

These things cannot be learned just by reading. As anyone who has put together a large jigsaw puzzle can tell you, you cannot find where an obscure piece fits just by "reading" the puzzle picture. You find where it fits by studying the nuances of color, detail, and shape of the piece and the puzzle. After you are well into the puzzle, many pieces are fitted by sheer intuition alone. The more puzzles you do, the quicker your intuition about color, detail, and shape develops.

I did the Franco-Prussian War exercise in about 60 hours. When I finished, I was convinced that if the French had had a commander with even average skill in operational art, at best they could have stalemated the overwhelmingly superior Prussian Army. At worst they could have delayed the Prussians long enough to have mobilized additional forces. Who knows what kind of political forces might have come to play in a long, drawn-out struggle? As it was, the war for all practical purposes was over in four weeks. Emperor Napoleon III had surrendered; the French Army's 300,000 soldiers were casualties, prisoners, or bottled up in fortresses under siege. The course of European history was fundamentally changed, and the stage was set for the great wars of the 20th century.

What would the original Napoleon have done, or, for that matter, what would I have done with those 300,000 soldiers? I now know what I would have done. I felt it intensely; I even dreamt about it for weeks after that exercise. It became, surprisingly, a keenly emotional experience. At times I felt like I was no longer a spectator in the war but a participant.

I got the idea for the exercise from Dr. Jay Luvaas's article titled "Thinking at the Operational Level." In it he suggests a methodology for learning the operational art, and, in my view, gives substance to those operative words of General Richardson and Colonel Holder: "systematically searching" and "mastery." He invokes the wisdom of many of the great military captains and thinkers such as Frederick the Great, Napoleon, Clausewitz, and Moltke, and suggests that if it worked for them it "is probably still valid." The essence of the article can perhaps best be described by a quotation he attributes to the English military critic Spenser Wilkinson. Wilkinson is describing Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke's history of the 1859 Italian Campaign, which was written in 1862 for use at the *Kriegsakademie*—where the German General Staff was schooled. The critic writes that Moltke's history

is a model of . . . positive criticism. At every stage the writer places himself in turn in the position of the commander of each side, and sketches clearly and concisely the measures which at that moment would, in his opinion, have been the most appropriate. This is undoubtedly the true method of teaching the general's art, and the best exercise in peace that can be devised."

This quotation, incidentally, comes from Wilkinson's 1890 classic on the German General Staff—*The Brain of an Army*—a book which Elihu Root acknowledged played an important part in the creation of the US Army War College.<sup>11</sup>

Moltke's own words as quoted in the preface to Wilkinson's work are equally instructive. The object of his history of the Italian Campaign is "to ascertain as accurately as possible the nature of the events in Northern Italy during those few eventful weeks, to deduce from them their causes—in short, to exercise that objective criticism without which the facts themselves do not afford effective instructions for our own benefit."<sup>12</sup>

Frederick the Great had similar thoughts. He cautioned his officers not to be content with memorization of the details of a great captain's exploits but "to examine thoroughly his overall views and particularly *to learn how to think in the same way.*"<sup>13</sup>

Thus, it seems to me, there is ample testimony of the great value of intimate study of military history to the professional soldier of today. But let me go further: there is positive danger in *not* studying in this fashion. FM 100-5 contains excellent and well-grounded theory about how to fight. The basic tenets of AirLand Battle—initiative, depth, agility, and synchronization—are set forth. The dynamics of battle—maneuver, firepower, protection, leadership—are described. The US Army's nine principles of war are listed and defined. While few would question the validity of these theoretical concepts of warfighting, the danger lies in unskilled application of such theory. There are so many variables in war that no two operations will ever be exactly the same. It follows, then, that no two individual applications of some principle or rule will produce the same result. A German historian of the late 19th century wisely observed, "It is well known that military history, when superficially studied, will furnish arguments in support of any theory or opinion."<sup>14</sup> The danger lies with the operational commander and his staff who are well-read on the narrative level of history but without experience in actual combat (or in the vicarious re-creation of combat through systematic historical exercising). However competent their intelligence might be, their operational intuition and instincts are untested. They may be easily betrayed into placing too great a value on theory to produce victory. In his classic, *The Conduct of War*, Baron Von der Goltz talks about the pitfalls of exalting theory over experience:

It is a remarkable yet explicable phenomenon, that precisely in those armies where the commander is afforded the fewest opportunities to acquire practical experience, the number of those is great who imagine that they were intended for generals, and who consider the practice of this vocation easy. But in the school of golden practice such impressions are, of course, quickly rectified through experience of failure, difficulties, and misfortune.<sup>15</sup>

### *Combat Experience in Peacetime?*

All right, then, we need to expose our would-be leaders to the experience of war in order to train them to succeed in war. But how are we to solve this problem in a peacetime army? Liddell Hart provides the clue:

[History] lays the foundation of education by showing how mankind repeats its errors, and what those errors are. It was Bismarck who made the scornful comment so apt for those who are fond of describing themselves as "practical men" in contrast to "theorists"—"fools say they learn by experience. I prefer to learn by other people's experience." The *study* of history offers us that opportunity. It is universal experience—*infinitely longer, wider, and more varied* than any individual experience.<sup>16</sup> (italics supplied)

What the US Army has is a new (new, at least, to the current officer generation) warfighting concept—operational art. It is a fundamental concept of the AirLand Battle doctrine, and it is a skill without which we cannot expect to win. It is a skill that requires, in addition to technical competence, qualities of judgment, intuition, and instinct that can be developed only through combat experience. We have no way now, and we hope never to have a way, to gain such experience through actual combat. Wars are not provided for training and few leaders in war get a second chance. Therefore, if we are to be able to develop leaders skilled in the operational art we must find a way to approximate, as closely as possible, the experience of combat. We can do this through the *systematic study* of military history.

Earlier I described an exercise I did based on the Franco-Prussian War. The object was to get so intimately familiar with the situation that I could actually picture myself as the commander on the ground, where I could see the situation develop approximately as he might have seen it. It was similar to any of a number of war games I have played—with the crucial exception that *with detailed preparation* I felt a part of the action. I felt pressure, frustration, anger, impatience. I made good decisions and I made fatal decisions. It was by far the most instructive academic experience in the art and science of war that I ever had.

This is how I went about it. I studied translations of original documents such as message traffic and correspondence, G2 estimates, march tables, maps, operation plans, newspaper reports, eyewitness accounts, and, to a limited extent, official and unofficial histories written soon after the war to fill information gaps in the primary sources. (Literally hundreds of volumes are available for study on every conceivable aspect of the war.) Using these documents I reconstructed, day by day, the events that occurred from mobilization in mid-July 1870 through the first battles in early August to the defeat of the French Army at Sedan on 1 September

1870. I concentrated on the French forces in the period 27 July to 3 August 1870, just prior to the outbreak of hostilities, when the opportunity for the initiative was equally available to both forces. I deployed both forces, in turn, down to corps level and studied everything I could find about the corps' and armies' mobilization status, state of training, commanders, logistics, morale, weapons, and lines of communication. I also tried to determine as accurately as possible what the opposing commanders knew about the enemy and friendly situations, when they knew it, and what they did with available information.

It was tedious work at first, but after getting deeply involved the exercise became absorbing. Advantageous and dangerous situations began to jump out at you. More often, however, there was great confusion and uncertainty on both sides, although more so on the French than the German side. I looked for moments when important decisions were or could have been made and asked myself—tentatively—what I would have done under the same circumstances. I then examined whether what I would have done was supportable in terms of logistics, lines of communication, forces available, terrain, and chances of success versus risks incurred.

For instance, on 1 August 1870, the French had more than three corps, about 130,000 men, which were sufficiently ready for war to have



Courtesy The Daily Press, Inc.

In addition to individual study, terrain walks are a valuable training method. USAWC professor Jay Luvans is shown here conducting such a walk for senior officers over the Chancellorsville battlefield.

taken a limited offensive against the flank of the 3d Prussian Army, the southernmost army in the Prussian forces. A limited objective attack could have been launched by 3 August, with a very reasonable chance of success in my view. The objective could have been to convince the Prussians that a deep French attack through the southern flank of Germany was in progress. (Such a grand plan was, in fact, proposed.) Positive results might have been an early French tactical victory, which was badly needed for political and morale reasons, and consequent repositioning of the 1st and 2d Prussian Armies if the deception worked. In any event, significant disruption of Prussian plans and mobilization progress could be expected, and an element of uncertainty as to French capabilities and intentions might have been imposed on the minds of the Prussian leadership. Additional time for mobilization would probably have been provided to the French as the Prussians reacted to the French "invasion." Even if defeated in battle, the French had a protected southern flank and avenues of withdrawal, making the risk of destruction of the French Army remote. They would certainly have succeeded, to some degree, in altering Prussian plans.

The value of this and numerous other "what if" analyses in this exercise lies not in what the student is taught but in how he is taught. It is the decisions of the operational-level leader that ultimately determine success or failure of an operation. All of the friction, luck, and misfortune of war are set in motion, directly or indirectly, by the implementation of the commander's decisions. It is simple—the better the decision, the better the chance of success. This type of exercise—a thoughtful, step-by-step, critical retracement of a campaign—improves the student's capacity to make operational decisions *by actually exercising his decisionmaking in an authentic historical context.*

Instead of reading about or being told that in war information is often confusing and conflicting, the student grows accustomed to "working" in this type of environment. Through these experiences he gains familiarity with war by his vicarious participation—by empathizing with the historical operational commander in the act of reaching decisions and then by second-guessing those decisions where indicated. His intellect acquires an enhanced ability to penetrate the fog of war by actually having to do it. By "firsthand" experience the student acquires an enhanced level of insight to such important considerations as ammunition resupply, reconstitution of reserves, reconnaissance, maps, space required for maneuver, fire support, the time it takes to concentrate large forces, and so forth. His appreciation of the value of such factors as strong reserves, the initiative, freedom of maneuver, synchronization, deception, and surprise is given added substance by "seeing" those values rather than by simply being told of such values. In the same way his shortcomings will be highlighted and techniques to compensate devised.

A leader's perspective is seasoned and broadened by his "living" the experience of others. History will not and cannot give us ready-made answers to problems. Situations will never be the same. But the leader whose intellect has been enriched by a systematically cultivated perspective derived from sharing the experience of predecessors will be more likely to make sound decisions. He will be able to confront a complicated situation filled with uncertainty and risk and more readily discover the best way to achieve the objective because his habits and instincts are sound. Colonel G. F. R. Henderson was probably the greatest proponent of this method of learning the operational art. Henderson thought little of most of the military texts of his day. He felt that they stressed the memorization of principles at the expense of truly internalizing the art of war so that the proper course becomes reflexive:

The principles [of war] are few in number and simple in theory; they are . . . the guiding spirit of all manoeuvres, . . . but if there is one fact more conspicuous than another in the records of war, it is that, in practice they are as readily forgotten as they are difficult to apply. The truth is that the . . . maxims and . . . regulations which set forth the rules of war go no deeper than the memory; and in the excitement of battle the memory is useless; habit and instinct are alone to be relied upon."

The passage above and the one that follows below are from Henderson's book, *The Battle of Spicheren*—a classic which should be on every officer's bookshelf. Leading with famous words from Clausewitz and ending with words from Baron Von der Goltz on the subject of generals, he says:

"In war all is simple, but the simple is difficult." . . . Without practical experience the most complicated problems can be readily solved upon the map. To handle troops on manoeuvres . . . is a harder task; but its difficulties decrease with practice. But before the enemy where the honor of the nation and the judgement of the present and of future generations are at stake, where history is making and the lives of thousands may be the cost of a mistake, there, under such a weight of responsibility, common sense and even practised military judgment find it no simple matter to assert themselves. "Very frequently," says Von der Goltz, "the time will be wanting for careful considerations. Sometimes the excitement does not permit it. Resolve, and this is a truth which those who have not seen war will do well to ponder over, is then something instinctive."

If we want to be good at warfighting we have to learn to think at the operational level. We have to train our minds, hone our instincts,

sharpen our intuition, enliven our reflexes, and form our habits by getting as close as possible to the real thing. Nothing else will work. Reading, no matter how voracious and no matter how relevant, is not enough. Increases in schoolhouse hours, no matter how great, are not enough. The Germans have a word for what we seek to develop—*fingerspitzengefühl*. It means, roughly, a feeling in the fingertips. You cannot teach it—you can only learn it, and then only if you go about it right. Perhaps this is what J. F. C. Fuller really meant when he said: "Until you learn how to teach yourselves, you will never be taught by others."

### ***Recommendations***

To teach the tactical levels of warfighting, the Army has in place functioning, effective systems in the schools and in the field to institutionalize tactical excellence. Even the Army's series of field manuals on training (FMs 25-1 thru 25-5) are devoted entirely to training at the tactical level. FM 25-1, *Training*, embodying the Army's training philosophy, should be titled "tactical training." To institutionalize excellence at the operational level of war, no such comprehensive system exists. There are two aspects of the operational art which must be taught. One is the mechanical or scientific aspect. This aspect includes the skills and procedures required to supply, maneuver, and manage large forces over large, often populated areas; the apparatus to acquire sufficient intelligence data upon which to act; and the command, control, and communications to bring it all together and enable it to work. Colonel Holder's article on "Training at the Operational Level" offers workable, systematic solutions to this half of the operational art training problem. The other half of the problem, the one I've concentrated on in this article and in my view the more important half, is how operational-level leaders and their staffs can be imbued with the necessary *fingerspitzengefühl* to serve them in the face of the enemy: what maneuver might work and what won't, what's important and what's not, when to strike and when not, what's too much and what's not enough. Without leadership with this practiced feel for battle, even the most highly refined operational machine may go charging off in the wrong direction.

With AirLand Battle doctrine comes a new training imperative for the US Army: to teach those officers who are or may become operational-level commanders and staffers how to teach themselves lessons that otherwise can be learned only in wartime. Some suggestions:

- *Officer schools.* All schools should require each student to complete one or more historical studies (roughly 40 hours each) similar to the Franco-German War exercise described above and not unlike those accomplished by officers of the German General Staff under Moltke and by US officers of the staff and war colleges before World War II. At the basic

and advanced course levels the study should be tactical. At the staff and war college levels there should be a minimum of two studies, each oriented on the operational level. It is critical that all studies be based on individual effort, and there must be oral and written feedback and evaluation mechanisms. This means getting serious about training and, yes, putting some heat on the students.

- *Individual study.* Annually, when not in one of the officer schools, each officer should complete an exercise similar to those conducted under school supervision. A written report and feedback would be provided to the proponent (either branch school or TRADOC directorate) which provided the individual study packet. Again, quality of performance should be noted on evaluation reports.

- *Operational-level terrain walks and staff rides.* There should be field-grade and general officer terrain walks, drives, and flights over the actual terrain of important historical operations (see illustration, p. 58). These would be in addition to current operational terrain walks now conducted by the forward-deployed corps and armies. There are many accessible locations in the States, Europe, and Korea. Guide packets would be prepared by the proponent and terrain walks conducted by corps- or army-level personnel, especially selected and prepared for the duty. Extensive individual preliminary preparation would be required, and operations briefings would be presented by the participants before, during, and after the exercise. (It is interesting to note that the War College class of 1936-37 was given a full month to prepare for a terrain walk.)

- *Specialized war-gaming.* While much can be learned from historical campaigns, the nature of future warfare may be very different. Applicability of historical lessons to current warfighting is, therefore, limited in degree depending on the campaign studied. Hypothetical scenarios based on updated versions of earlier campaigns, providing the same level of background and detail, would have to be developed. A variety of realistic, stressful campaign simulations could be created and played annually by senior officers individually or in small groups at centrally located war-gaming sites. Feedback and evaluation for the record will again be critical.

These suggestions, or similar proposals, will not be cheap or easy to develop, obviously. Neither will it be easy for senior officers to find the time—two or more weeks per year when not in school—for systematic study and exercise in the operational art. However, if we are going to institutionalize excellence in the operational art as we have in tactics, we have to do a lot more than provide a few hours' instruction in our schools, reading lists, and voluntary self-study programs. There must be a structured, intensive, and comprehensive training program with frequent evaluation that has significant implications for promotion.

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*“Evaluation means getting serious about training and, yes, putting some heat on students.”*

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In this, we might look to the German example. Readers of Trevor N. Depuy (*A Genius for War*) and Martin van Creveld (*Fighting Power: German Military Performance, 1939-1945*) are persuaded that the German armies of World War II, and of the hundred years preceding that war, were then the finest fighting forces in the world by any standard. “Masterpieces of the military art” was how van Creveld described German campaigns of World War II.<sup>19</sup> Depuy says that “performance comparable to that of the German armies . . . can be found only in armies led by such military geniuses as Alexander, Hannibal, Caesar, Gustavus Adolphus, Genghis Khan and Napoleon.”<sup>20</sup> The Germans’ secret, the phenomenon that separated their army from all others in excellence, was the German General Staff, and “the special qualities of professionalism that differentiated that General Staff from imitations in all other nations.”<sup>21</sup>

One of the principal components of the German General Staff developmental process, and the institutionalization of military excellence which the General Staff accomplished, was an intense emphasis on the study of military history. Staff officers wrote about its significance, and “they invariably emphasized the importance of history for acquiring the theoretical foundations for military science, and for gaining an understanding of human performance in conflict situations.”<sup>22</sup> The German Army institutionalized excellence in large part by emphasis on the *study* of military history, and that is an experience from which we should learn.

Another principal component of the General Staff developmental process was examination. Evaluation as a prerequisite to promotion *required* German officers to study the profession *seriously* and contributed to a higher quality of “professional understanding and performance throughout the entire Army.”<sup>23</sup> In order to institutionalize excellence in the operational art, systematic operational studies impelled by meaningful evaluation are the only way.

### ***Conclusion***

As the US Army and its AirLand Battle doctrine mature together, the Army is without a laboratory of actual warfighting experience. The only way to gain such experience is to appropriate the experiences of others and to learn from them. With small armies, like Napoleon’s, the wellspring of

such experience could reside in the head of one or just a few. In large armies like the German Army of World War II or the American Army of the 1980s and 1990s, the wellspring of experience must reside in the heads of many. We cannot make AirLand Battle doctrine work the way we are going about it now. The operational gap between military strategy and tactics is too large and too important to be filled with current training philosophy and practice. You can get there from here *if* the need for major change is recognized and progress toward change is forthcoming.

We deter war by being ready to fight and win the war. Skill in the operational art is the bedrock of winning. The potential Napoleons and Pattons in our Army today might emerge given a long enough war. But we may not have that kind of time. Unless we can institutionalize excellence in the operational art, we may be ready to fight, but we will not be ready to win.

#### NOTES

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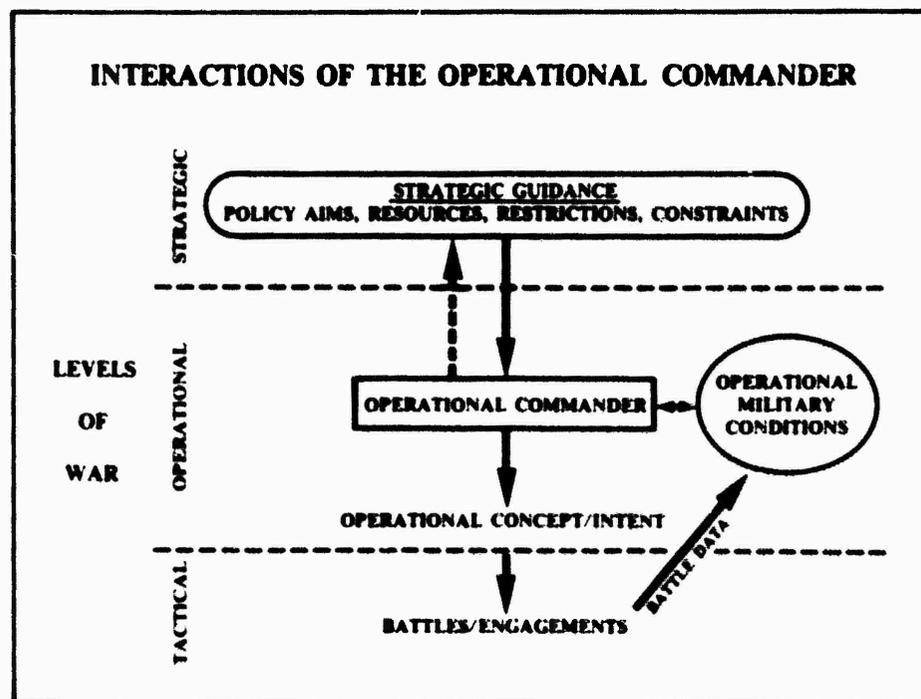
# Strategy and the Operational Level of War: Part I

DAVID JABLONSKY

**W**ar, like Gaul, is divided into three parts. The 1982 edition of FM 100-5 introduced this three-part formulation to the Army, and the 1986 version builds upon the structure by defining strategy, operational art, and tactics as the "broad divisions of activity in preparing for and conducting war." This separation is not, as it was in Caesar's case, merely for organizational convenience. It is, rather, a recognition that war is a complex business requiring coordination from the highest levels of policymaking to the basic levels of execution. Without such a division, as General Glenn K. Otis has pointed out, "We will talk by each other even as professionals."

The intermediate or operational level is at the pivotal location in this structure. Simply put, the commander's basic mission at this level is to determine the sequence of actions most likely to produce the military conditions that will achieve the strategic goals (as shown in the diagram on the next page). The operational commander, in other words, must be constantly interacting with the strategic level even as he gauges his adversary and determines how to use tactical forces to accomplish that sequence of actions. It is this interaction that makes strategy the key to the operational level of war.

The commanders and staff at this level must recognize, as Marcus Tullius Cicero did two millennia ago, that an "army is of little value in the field unless there are wise councils at home." On a more modern note, Germany's operational and tactical brilliance in World War II is often positively cited concerning the operational level of war. What is not so frequently noted is that this brilliance was no substitute for a sound and



coherent strategy and that, in fact, Germany was defeated primarily because Hitler's strategic objectives far exceeded his military capabilities. To this strategic-operational disconnect, Hitler's field commanders responded, as one historian has noted, "like short-money players in a table-stakes poker game, concentrating on winning battlefield victories to demonstrate their *virtu* and avert the end as long as possible."<sup>4</sup>

#### *Ends, Ways, Means*

Strategic guidance is the link between the highest level of war and the operational commanders. This guidance should, in theory, contain a balanced blend of ends (objectives), ways (concepts), and means (resources).<sup>5</sup> The proper blending of these interdependent elements, however, has always been a difficult process, made even more so in the modern era where limited objectives and diffusion of military power are the norms. "In the past," Henry Kissinger has pointed out, "the major problem of strategists was to assemble superior strength; in the contemporary period, the problem more frequently is how to discipline the available power into some relationship to the objectives likely to be in dispute."<sup>6</sup>

Ideally, the strategic ends, ways, and means provided to the operational commander should allow him to achieve a positive result without serious fighting as did Moltke's encirclement of the French army at Sedan in 1870 or Allenby's entrapment of the Turks in the Samarian hills in

1918.<sup>7</sup> At the very least, there should be some harmonization of these factors that allows a successful operational outcome, no matter how protracted the struggle. Reflecting on the Vietnam War in this regard, General Palmer viewed it as the government's responsibility "to see that the ends and means are kept in balance—that the strategic objectives under the strategic concept adopted are achievable with the forces and other resources expected to be available."<sup>8</sup>

That there was an imbalance between these factors during the Vietnam War has become almost a cliché, particularly in terms of Clausewitz's injunction that no one should go to war "without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."<sup>9</sup> Unlike Hanoi, Washington possessed no clearly defined political objectives, or, if it did, it never succeeded in impressing these firmly in the mind of the body politic. Without these objectives, there could be no overall grand strategic design. In the absence of such a design, the Joint Chiefs advocated a strategic concept that included partial mobilization, land and air actions in Laos and Cambodia, a naval blockade of North Vietnam, and the preparation of a US logistics base in Thailand to deter intervention by the People's Republic of China. The fact that these recommendations were never fully accepted consigned General Westmoreland to a protracted struggle of attrition at the operational level. As a consequence, the Chiefs became caught up in MACV requests for ever higher force levels that could only be reviewed, as General Palmer has pointed out, "in a strategic vacuum without a firm feeling for what the ultimate requirement might be."<sup>10</sup>

Ultimately, therefore, operational concepts must be designed to achieve political objectives. In World War II, the United States was able to finesse the problem of defining objectives somewhat by adopting the transcendent goal of unconditional surrender. No political directive, for instance, was ever issued to General Eisenhower by either his American superiors or the Combined Chiefs of Staff. In fact, Washington consistently indicated to Eisenhower that "military solutions were preferred."<sup>11</sup> In Korea, on the other hand, the political objective was finally modified to bring it in line with the resources Washington was willing to expend. On a more limited note, the Falklands and Grenada actions are examples of fitting the operational concepts to the political objectives.<sup>12</sup>

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Nowhere is the interdependence between the strategic and operational levels more apparent than in the matter of means or resources, particularly since military strategy in the modern era has become even more dependent on logistics than in the 18th century. The 1.5 million artillery shells that were positioned for the 1916 British offensive on the Somme encouraged the adoption of static warfare at the operational level because the munitions could not be moved forward, laterally, or even backward.<sup>13</sup> Logistical considerations, as one historian concluded in discussing General Eisenhower's decision for a broad thrust to the Rhine in September 1944, "exert a strong influence not only on strategic planning but also on the conduct of operations once the battle has begun."<sup>14</sup>

Certainly, this conclusion applies to the Eastern Front in the same war where the *Wehrmacht* fought with an antiquated logistical system.<sup>15</sup> In this regard, it is often pointed out that Hitler should not have dissipated his forces in simultaneous operational-level offenses along three divergent axes, but instead should have concentrated them for a single thrust toward Moscow. This ignores the fact, however, that the road and rail networks available would not have allowed such a narrow concentration of forces.<sup>16</sup> In a similar manner, the South lost the American Civil War primarily because its strategic means did not match its strategic ends and ways. No amount of operational finesse on the part of the South's great captains could compensate for the superior industrial strength and manpower that General Grant could deploy. Ultimately, the capability of the Union generals to bring the largest and best-equipped forces into their theaters meant, as Michael Howard has pointed out, "that the operational skills of their adversaries were rendered almost irrelevant."<sup>17</sup>

The Civil War also illustrates another aspect of the strategic ends-ways-means equation that had to be relearned as part of the Vietnam experience. The political objectives as well as the operational instrument are linked inextricably to the other part of the Clausewitzian trinity—the national will—or what Professor Howard refers to as the social dimension of strategy. That dimension on the part of the Union is what prevented the early Southern victories at the operational level from being strategically decisive and what ultimately allowed time for the enormous logistical potential north of the Potomac to be realized.<sup>18</sup>

### *Constraints, Restraints, and the Continuing Dialogue*

Complicating the harmonization of ends, ways, and means is the fact that strategic guidance is heavily influenced by international and domestic political considerations. These considerations, in turn, determine actions or methods that can constrain commanders at the operational level. The present compromise concept of Forward Defense in NATO strategy is one example. In World War II, Hitler (unlike NATO's commander today)

had ample space to trade after his deep penetration of Russia stalled. But for psychological and economic reasons he ordered his forces on a continuing basis to hold ground at all costs. The military results were devastating to the German effort at the operational and ultimately at the strategic level.<sup>19</sup> In a similar manner, actual restrictions may negate or narrow the range of a commander's operational alternatives. Some may concern the use of particular weaponry, as was the case with nuclear weapons in Korea and Vietnam. Others may prohibit operations either in certain areas, such as the North Korean frontier with the Soviet Union during the Korean War, or against certain targets, such as the Red River dikes in Vietnam.<sup>20</sup>

Operational commanders should consistently examine the effects of such constraints and restrictions on the achievement of their goals. Where these political factors seriously threaten his success, the commander should seek either relaxation of the offending restrictions or adjustment of the goals accordingly. As Liddell Hart points out, "The military objective should be governed by the political objective, subject to the basic condition that policy does not demand what is militarily . . . impossible."<sup>21</sup> It can sometimes be a very near call. In the fall of 1973, for instance, the Israeli Defense Force was in the dangerous position of depending on a reserve force that required a minimum of two days' warning for mobilization while faced with a situation in which there could be no real warning. From an operational perspective, the solution was to mobilize the reserves, wait, and then launch preemptive attacks against the large masses of troops deployed by Egypt and Syria on their frontiers with Israel. Full-scale mobilization, however, is an expensive proposition. Moreover, as Golda Meir's government well realized, Israel could no longer afford the political risk inherent in a 1967-like preemption, particularly in terms of the Soviet reaction, growing European neutralism, the new political threat of Arab oil diplomacy, and, above all, increased reliance on the United States, whose increasingly isolationist mood was already apparent.<sup>22</sup>

There should thus be, in other words, a continuing dialogue between the strategic and operational commanders. The importance of such a process was demonstrated during the Vietnam War when US military leaders failed to advise the civilian leadership that the strategy being pursued was not working and that it would in all probability fail to achieve American objectives. In this context, to complain, as some have done, that the Vietnam War was won militarily but lost politically is to misunderstand the nature of the essential strategic-operational linkage—the same mistake made by the German military leaders in 1918 who attempted to separate the two interdependent political-military dimensions by blaming their defeat on a political "stab in the back."<sup>23</sup>

Korea offers an equally instructive case in terms of a systematic continuing dialogue between the strategic and operational levels. On the

positive side, General MacArthur used such a process to bring about the Inchon landing, the great operational success of the war. In many respects, his personal intervention was much like that of Hitler's in 1940, which overcame the army High Command's resistance to the innovative Manstein plan and thus made the French Campaign possible. In MacArthur's case, of course, the intervention was made from the lower end of the strategic-operational connection against opposition that included Generals Bradley and Collins, who had been in the European Theater of Operations during the costly near-fiasco of Anzio and were thus doubly conscious of the high risks involved in amphibious operations.<sup>24</sup> Typically, the operational artist prevailed. "If they say it is too big a gamble," MacArthur told his courier to the JCS just prior to the operation, "tell them I said this is throwing a nickel in the pot after it has been opened for a dollar. The big gamble was Washington's decision to put American troops on the Asiatic mainland."<sup>25</sup>

The darker side of MacArthur's dialogue with the strategic level is well known. Despite the change in conflict aims as the Korean War progressed, the civilian and military strategic leaders did not deviate from the concept of limited war. It is no reflection on MacArthur's great operational successes in World War II and at Inchon to question whether he fully appreciated the strategic implications of the limited war he was fighting—the type of conflict, as his successor pointed out, "in which the objectives are specifically limited in the light of our national interest and our current capabilities."<sup>26</sup> Certainly, the aura of those earlier successes, the rank and generational differences between MacArthur and the JCS, and the fact that he had been a virtual warlord in the Pacific for decades inhibited a functional and open dialogue between the operational and strategic levels.<sup>27</sup>

### *Strategic Influence on the Operational Perspective*

The strategic connection challenges the operational commanders to broaden their perspective, to think beyond the limits of immediate combat. Napoleon, for instance, was not the benefactor of any great breakthrough in technology. He was, however, willing to take chances in expanding the concepts of time and space under which military commanders had labored for thousands of years. In order to harness these two variables in terms of control and uncertainty, commanders had traditionally kept their forces closely concentrated. Napoleon, in contrast, reorganized and decentralized his *Grande Armée* so that its parts could operate independently over relatively extended time and space with a higher degree of uncertainty in order to achieve the operational whole. Matching that whole to strategic objectives, as Clausewitz recognized, was the key link in the process—one that was simpler for Napoleon since he was also the political leader for much of his later career.<sup>28</sup>



Courtesy USAMHI

The operational coup at Inchon on 16 September 1950 reversed the tide of the war. Here, US 7th Division forces during the UN advance of 20 May to 24 June 1951.

"A higher commander," Field Marshal Slim wrote, "must think 'big.'"<sup>10</sup> Slim's advice is particularly true at the operational level of war, for at this level the commander must deal, however derivatively, with strategic goals that require him to focus on broad but decisive operational objectives extended over time and space beyond the tactical realm. These objectives can range anywhere from destruction of committed forces or reserves to co-opting allies to even more abstract goals such as eroding the enemy's public support. Neither Dien Bien Phu (1953) nor Tet (1968), for instance, was militarily crippling to the French and American armies, respectively; yet these events struck decisively at the popular and political support of both wars.

It is not always easy to pinpoint the decisive operational weaknesses of the enemy. But when the strategic link is present, what Clausewitz termed the enemy's center of gravity stands revealed, and it is possible to take the initiative, even control of the war, by focusing on "the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends."<sup>10</sup> In the Punic Wars, for example, Scipio fought without success against Hannibal on the Italian peninsula. When the Roman general moved his campaign to North Africa, however, he forced Hannibal to abandon his successful campaign in Italy

and return to Carthage where he was eventually defeated. In a similar manner, the Confederacy set the pattern for much of the American Civil War by keeping its main weight in northern Virginia. Grant's campaign in the West put some counterweight along the Mississippi. But it was Sherman's campaign into the heart of the Confederacy that shifted the weight of the war. "I think our campaign of the last month," he wrote from Savannah, "as well as every step I take from this point northward, is as much a direct attack upon Lee's army as though we were operating within the sound of his artillery."<sup>31</sup>

Broad objectives mean broad vision. "From the beginning of this campaign," General Eisenhower wrote in September 1944, "I have always *visualized* that as soon as substantial destruction of the enemy forces in France could be accomplished, we should advance rapidly on the Rhine by pushing through the Aachen Gap in the north and through the Metz Gap in the south."<sup>32</sup> The operational commander, in other words, describes a concept that envisions, for the most part, the accomplishment of the strategic and operational missions despite the fact that he can seldom describe operations beyond the first tactical decisions. This is why campaign plans are divided into phases and why variations on the concept are essential as the campaign proceeds.<sup>33</sup> This is also why, ultimately, there must be a clear delineation of the operational commander's intent, an aspect that has grown even more important as technological advances, larger forces, and greater time and space considerations have increased the need for flexibility and initiative in subordinate commands.

There is, then, sufficient strategic canvas normally available for the operational artist to sketch out a broad, overall framework for the employment of his forces. Within that framework, Napoleon combined a vivid imagination with a formidable capacity for calculating space in terms of time to predict outcomes beyond the individual battles. In one case, he accurately foresaw the location of a decisive encounter several weeks before it occurred.<sup>34</sup> And in World War II, Field Marshal von Manstein believed that an operational commander at the army group level should be able to predict the general way operations would proceed anywhere from four to six weeks in advance.<sup>35</sup>

Such prescience, of course, is of little use if it is not fully acted upon at the operational level and can, in such a case, adversely affect the strategy upon which it is predicated. In 1940, most of the attention the German High Command lavished on the plan for the invasion of the West was focused on the actual breakthrough, and very little on its immediate aftermath. The possibility that the plan would lead to total victory over France, as Alistair Horne has indicated, "seemed so remote that beyond the operation itself no thought whatsoever had been given to how a knockout blow might be administered to Britain."<sup>36</sup> Britain's successful evacuation at Dunkirk was the immediate consequence. And what appeared to be a

spectacular operational success in the French campaign actually meant that Hitler failed in his principal strategic aim of coercing Britain into accepting German hegemony on the continent.<sup>37</sup>

### *The Continuum of War*

The strategic level is dominant in the continuum of war because, as we have noted, it is here that the war's political goals are defined. It is the process of interacting with the strategic level, directly or derivatively, that causes the operational commander to form his unique perspective (again, as shown in the earlier diagram). For he alone, to be successful, must conceptualize a military condition or conditions that will ultimately achieve the strategic goals. As indicated by the two-way arrow in the diagram, this is a constant interactive process, normally requiring many refinements or revisions as he plans and executes his campaigns or major operations. These adjustments will affect, in turn, how engagements and battles are sequenced at the tactical level to achieve the operational military situation he desires. In this manner, as Clausewitz has written, "the commander is always on the high road to his goal."<sup>38</sup>

In one sense, then, the operational artist is an impressionist. There is movement all about him. Strategic goals and guidance shift as do the individual pieces of the tactical mosaics. All of this is distilled over time and space to form a picture, a one-time impression of military conditions at the operational level that will achieve the strategic objectives. Strategy remains the dynamic and informing vision. If new elements enter the operational commander's ken, the operational picture will change to form a new impression of what must be created militarily to meet the strategic imperative.

When that imperative is not the dominant force in the process—when, in other words, operational and tactical considerations determine strategy—the result is usually disastrous. In late 19th-century France, for instance, the officer corps distrusted the trend by the Third Republic toward shorter terms of military service, which it believed threatened the army's professional character and traditions. Adopting an offensive operational doctrine and elevating it to the strategic level was a means to combat this trend, since there was general agreement that an army consisting primarily of reservists and short-term conscripts could be used only in the defense. The officers' philosophy was summed up by their leader, General Joffre, who explained that in planning for the next war he had "no preconceived idea, other than a full determination to take the offensive with all my forces assembled."<sup>39</sup> Under these circumstances, French doctrine became increasingly unhinged from strategic reality as it responded to the more immediate demands of domestic and intragovernmental politics. The result was France's ill-conceived strategic lunge in 1914 toward its former possessions in the east, a lunge which nearly provided a sufficient margin of

assistance for Germany's Schlieffen Plan (itself another misguided product of heeding operational needs at the expense of strategy).<sup>40</sup>

An associated and equally important problem can occur when the operational perspective becomes so narrow or self-absorbed that there is a strategic disconnect. Ironically, this type of problem is illustrated by the desert campaigns of Field Marshal Rommel, normally considered a paragon of operational virtue. North Africa was not a major theater for Germany, which had entered the conflict there only because of Italian reverses at the hands of the British in the fall of 1940. Rommel repeatedly violated the intended economy-of-force strategy by attempting to advance beyond a reasonable distance from his bases. His initial successes in these forays prompted him in March 1941 to raise his sights to include the seizure of the Suez Canal and the eastern oil fields.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately for Germany, these operational goals were neither derived from, nor consonant with, Berlin's military strategy. The result was strategic resourcing priorities that never matched the operational sustainment needs of the *Afrika Korps*.<sup>42</sup>

There may be times, of course, when strategic demands dictate an operational mission without full resourcing. A case in point is the World War II campaign at Guadalcanal, where in order to achieve the strategic aim of preventing Japanese expansion to the south, the Joint Chiefs directed the operational seizure of that island as a calculated risk under relatively unfavorable conditions.<sup>43</sup> Unlike Rommel's example, however, the decision was a strategic one. Operating in a similar strategic framework in the same conflict, General MacArthur accomplished the operational objectives of his island-hopping campaign with extremely limited resources in just one of several theaters of operations in a secondary theater of war.<sup>44</sup> This contrast to Rommel's narrow operational perspective would have been appreciated by Clausewitz. "A prince or a general can best demonstrate his genius," he wrote, "by managing a campaign exactly to suit his objectives and his resources, doing neither too much nor too little."<sup>45</sup>

#### NOTES

1. US Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual 100-5 (Washington: GPO, August 1982), p. 2-3; and revised version of FM 100-5 (May 1986), p. 9.
2. Interview with General Glenn K. Osis, 11 December 1985.
3. Quoted in Harry G. Summers, Jr., "Vietnam: Lessons Learned, Unlearned and Relearned," *The Art of War Quarterly*, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pa., June 1983, p. 32.
4. Dennis E. Showalter, "A Dubious Heritage: The Military Legacy of the Russo-German War," *Air University Review*, 36 (March-April 1985), 7.
5. Henry E. Eccles, "Strategy—The Theory and Application," *Naval War College Review*, 31 (May-June 1979), 13; and Arthur F. Lykke, Jr., "Toward an Understanding of Military Strategy," *Military Strategy: Theory and Application*, ed. Arthur F. Lykke, Jr. (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: US Army War College, 1972), pp. 3-7.
6. Henry A. Kissinger, ed., *Problems of National Strategy* (New York: Praeger, 1965), p. 5.
7. The operational commander should not seek battle so much as a situation "so advantageous that if it does not of itself produce the decision, its continuation by battle is sure to achieve this" (B. H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy* [New York: Praeger, 1967; 2nd ed.], p. 339; Hart's emphasis).

8. Bruce Palmer, Jr., *The 25-Year War: America's Military Role in Vietnam* (Lexington, Ky.: Univ. Press of Kentucky, 1984), p. 45.
9. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976), p. 579. That this injunction has been taken to heart by the civilian and military leadership of the armed forces is amply illustrated. Secretary of Defense Weinberger, for instance, used the quote in his November 1984 speech in which he outlined six major preconditions for committing US combat forces. Caspar W. Weinberger, "The Uses of Military Power," *Defense* 85 (January 1985) p. 10.
10. Palmer, p. 46.
11. Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory* (New York: Viking, 1973), p. 492. As a consequence, Eisenhower reached his decisions regarding the Russian entries into Berlin and Prague on primarily military grounds. When viewed in this military context, as Professor Pogue points out, the decision was proper. By halting Allied troops short of Berlin and Prague, Eisenhower took the quickest way to end the European war with the fewest number of US casualties, leaving the maximum number available for deployment to the Pacific.
12. Interview with General William E. DuPuy, 30 October 1985.
13. Martin van Creveld, *Supplying War: Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1978), p. 233. On the importance of logistics as an integral link between strategy and tactics, see Henry E. Eccles, *Military Concepts and Philosophy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1965), p. 69.
14. Roland G. Ruppenthal, "Logistics and the Broad-Front Strategy," in *Command Decisions*, ed. Kent Roberts Greenfield (Washington: US Army Center of Military History, 1960), p. 419. General McClellan in 1862 poses a prime example of letting operational sustainment drive a campaign and thus the overall strategy. McClellan had been greatly influenced by the studies of logistical mismanagement in the Crimean War. As a consequence, he was so preoccupied with the technical logistical phase of maintaining the Army of the Potomac that "he would go down in history as a failure in strategy and grand tactics" (R. Ernest Dupuy and Trevor N. Dupuy, *Military Heritage of America* [Fairfax, Va.: Hero Books, 1980], p. 207).
15. The system was "reminiscent of the Thirty Years War" (Showalter, p. 7).
16. Van Creveld, p. 175.
17. Michael Howard, "The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, 59 (Summer 1979), 977.
18. *Ibid.* See also Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: US Army War College, 1981), pp. 7-19.
19. This was certainly true from Stalingrad on. But when Hitler gave the initial order to hold before Moscow in December 1941, he probably saved his troops. See Earl F. Ziemke, *Stalingrad to Berlin: The Great Defeat in the East* (Washington: US Army Center of Military History, 1984), p. 15.
20. Richard H. Sinnreich, briefing on Army Doctrine and the Operational Level of War, 8 October 1985, delivered at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas.
21. Liddell Hart, p. 351.
22. Edward N. Luttwak and Daniel Horowitz, *The Israeli Army* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 341-42.
23. Summers, *On Strategy*, p. 49; Howard, p. 981; Palmer, pp. 46, 201.
24. D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur: Triumph and Disaster 1945-1964* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985), p. 465. "We drew up a list of every conceivable and natural handicap," one staff member remarked, "and Inchon had 'em all" (p. 467).
25. *Ibid.*, p. 475.
26. Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), p. 245.
27. General Collins commented after Inchon that MacArthur's prestige "was so overpowering that the Chiefs hesitated thereafter to question later plans and decisions of the general, which should have been challenged" (James, p. 465). In the fall of 1950, when General Vandenberg was asked by General Ridgway why the JCS did not simply order MacArthur what to do, the Air Force Chief responded: "What good would that do? He wouldn't obey the orders. What can we do?" (James, p. 537).
28. Martin van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985), pp. 101-02. For Clausewitz's treatment of time and space, see Harold W. Nelson, "Space and Time in *On War*," in *Clausewitz and Modern Strategy*, ed. Michael I. Handel (London: Frank Cass, 1986), pp. 134-49.
29. W. J. Slim, *Conduct of War* (London: The War Office, 1950), p. 22. In 1809, for instance, Napoleon carried a hand-drawn set of maps that covered all of Europe west of Russia (Van Creveld, *Command in War*, p. 290).
30. Clausewitz, pp. 595-96.
31. Bruce Catton, *This Hallowed Ground* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), p. 362.

32. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower. The War Years: IV*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler, Jr. (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1970), p. 2121. Emphasis added.
33. In discussing the individual actions that make up a campaign, Clausewitz pointed out that "most of these matters have to be based on assumptions that may not prove correct, while other, more detailed orders cannot be determined in advance at all" (Clausewitz, p. 177).
34. Van Creveld, *Command in War*, p. 63.
35. Erich von Manstein, *Last Victories* (Novato, Calif.: Presidio Press, 1982), p. 422.
36. Alistair Horne, *To Lose a Battle: France 1940* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969), p. 159. The problem with the plan was demonstrated the preceding March when Hitler asked General Guderian what he would do after establishing a bridgehead across the Meuse at Sedan on the fifth day of the campaign. "He was the first person who had thought to ask me this vital question," Guderian later commented. Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, trans. Constantine Fitzgibbon (New York: D. P. Dutton, 1952), p. 92.
37. After Dunkirk, Britain drew the United States even more into its war effort. With this first step in altering the balance, as Michael Geyer points out, "the strategic odds once again began to outrun operational successes" (Michael Geyer, "German Strategy in the Age of Machine Warfare," 1914-1945," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1986], p. 577).
38. Clausewitz, p. 182.
39. Theodore Ropp, *War in the Modern World* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), p. 229.
40. Jack Snyder, "Civil Military Relations and the Cult of the Offensive, 1914-1984," *International Security*, 9 (Summer 1984), 108, 133.
41. "My first objective," he wrote in early March 1941, "will be the reconquest of Cyrenaica; my second northern Egypt and the Suez Canal." Quoted in T. L. McMahon, *Operational Principles: The Operational Art of Erwin Rommel and Bernard Montgomery* (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: USACGSC, 1985), p. 48.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 54, 125-27.
43. Henry E. Eccles, *Military Concepts and Philosophy* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1965), p. 108.
44. Interview with General John R. Galvira, 28 October 1985. MacArthur, of course, had the same problem in Korea because of what was perceived as a worldwide, monolithic communist threat. The JCS, in effect, told MacArthur not to count on reinforcements from the general reserve in shaping his theater strategy (James, p. 179).
45. Clausewitz, p. 177.

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*In "Strategy and the Operational Level of War: Part II," which is to appear in the Summer 1987 issue of Parameters, Colonel Jablonsky will focus on the framework wherein US strategic goals are translated into operational missions on the battlefield. He will pay particular attention to strategic guidance in the theater of war, including its joint and combined dimensions.*

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# Soviet Military Theory: Relevant or Red Herring?

EDWARD B. ATKESON

**A**n astute student of Soviet military literature once compared the reading of official writings to eating cardboard. He found it unbearably stiff, repetitious, and indigestible. He made a good point. There is probably as formidable a hurdle to following Soviet ideas in the turgid style and interminable sentences in which they are written as there is in the language barrier itself. Winston Churchill may have had this onion-like quality of the literature in mind when he described the Soviet Union as a riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma.

Nevertheless, as with relatives, we cannot always choose our enemies; we can only study them and attempt to understand the processes of their minds. In this article we will be looking at the serious effort the Soviets have made toward the development of a theoretical construct to underpin their fighting machine and the framework within which they organize their ideas regarding the military operational art. The military competition with the West—and with the United States in particular—is not confined to the physical dimensions of the opposing forces; there is much more to the struggle than the bean-counters might lead us to believe.

For four decades the United States and the Soviet Union have maintained huge military establishments, each with a cautionary eye toward the corresponding forces and perceived interests of the other power. However, the two systems which have evolved in the process are remarkably dissimilar, and by all appearances are designed to operate according to very different patterns. Most particularly, the military logic underlying the design and training of the respective forces is far more remarkable in its

variances than in its similarities. The enormous differences in the geographic, ideological, historical, and economic backgrounds of the two countries, apparent to the least discerning observer, are no less evident in the nations' approaches to the solutions of their perceived security requirements.

Even the terminology used in describing various concepts pertinent to each approach is different, so much so that it is difficult to discuss the two approaches in parallel without risk of injustice to one set or the other. The ethical bases for the development of the contrasting systems which the United States and the USSR represent are more than we need to get into in this essay, but we should not overlook the fact that many terms designed to convey fundamental ethical concepts—"God," "democracy," "the people"—carry different connotations in the opposing cultures. We should not be surprised that terms treating with sensitive issues, such as the military security of the respective states, should likewise convey different meanings to the different audiences.

**T**he American attitude toward war and the military profession is heavily colored by the nation's history as a young, developing society, far from the perennial conflicts of 18th- and 19th-century Europe. While Carl von Clausewitz enjoys great esteem within the narrow readership of American military journals, and while his bust occupies a hallowed niche at the US Army War College, his notion that war is basically the pursuit of politics by other means has little coincidence with American public opinion. War and peace are mutually exclusive conditions by most American standards; the former is something which occurs at the initiation of others when all efforts to preserve the latter break down. War is popularly viewed as a chaotic condition resulting from failed policy, not as an alternative of equal legitimacy with the normal stresses and strains of international diplomacy or of domestic political give and take.

If, however, all other means for resolving issues are unsuccessful, and matters deteriorate to the point of resort to arms ("the final argument of kings"), the American ethic would have war vigorously pursued to a rapid and victorious conclusion. As General Douglas MacArthur said in his farewell address to Congress in 1951, "Once war is forced upon us, there is

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no other alternative than to apply every available means to bring it to a swift end. War's very object is victory—not prolonged indecision. In war, indeed, there can be no substitute for victory."<sup>1</sup> Upon attainment of this grand conclusion, the country would be expected to return to its normal status of peace and pursuit of the national pastimes: business, baseball, and the good life. In this sense, the great world wars of the 20th century are far more accurate models of American views of armed conflict than are the wars in Korea and Vietnam, where victory in the classic sense was less robustly pursued.

Soviet views are not only different, but differently derived. While they are, of course, affected by the Russian national heritage, they have not been subjected to the hammer and anvil of popular proposal and debate as is the norm in Western democracies. Instead, Soviet public opinion is essentially handed down to a compliant populace from a ruling elite. It is sufficient that the leadership interprets the national experience and adjudicates the appropriate mix of nationalist sentiment with Marxist-Leninist ideology. It is important in the socialist system that mass beliefs support the central dogma. Especially, anything as important as war and peace cannot be left to chance.

In 1915 Lenin spelled out the orthodox view of war which would govern in a socialist community once it had come into being through successful revolution. In doing so, he took the precaution of invoking the names of most of the prominent figures in the communist pantheon in order to insure the legitimacy of his words in the eyes of his fellow revolutionaries. "Applied to wars," he wrote, "the main thesis of dialectics . . . is that '*war is simply the continuation of politics by other (i.e. violent) means.*' This formula belongs to Clausewitz, . . . whose ideas were fertilized by Hegel. And this was always the standpoint of Marx and Engels, who regarded every war as the *continuation* of the politics of the given interested powers—and the various classes within these countries—at a given time" (emphasis in the original).<sup>2</sup>

A year later Lenin went on to proclaim the acceptability and purpose of certain types of wars for overthrowing the bourgeoisie worldwide. Not until socialism prevailed in every land, he argued, would wars disappear from the earth:

Socialists, without ceasing to be Socialists, cannot oppose any kind of war. . . . Socialists never have and never could oppose revolutionary wars. . . . [And] he who accepts the class struggle cannot fail to recognize civil wars which under any class society represent the natural, and under certain conditions, inevitable continuation of the development and aggravation of the class struggle. . . . [Further,] Socialism cannot win simultaneously *in all* countries [emphasis in the original]. It will win initially in one or several

countries, while the remainder will remain for some time, either bourgeois or pre-bourgeois. This should result not only in frictions, but also in direct striving of the bourgeoisie of other countries to smash the victorious proletariat of the socialist state. In such cases, a war on our part would be lawful and just.<sup>3</sup>

But it was not only defensive wars which might be considered "lawful and just." Lenin had already (in 1908) made it quite clear that "it is not the offensive or defensive character of the war, but the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat, or rather the interests of the international movement of the proletariat, that represent the only possible point of view [regarding the legitimacy of war]." Lenin went on to assert the need for worldwide revolution in order to do away with wars entirely. "Only after we overthrow, completely defeat, and expropriate the bourgeoisie in the entire world . . . will wars become impossible," he wrote.<sup>4</sup>

The doctrinal normalization of conflict, as we see here, conveys a strong connotation of obligation for the allocation of both intellectual and material resources to its management and theoretical development. The enormous growth in Soviet military power over the years, which has been amply documented elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> and the extensive efforts devoted to the development of a coherent, unified theory and science of war indicate that the Soviets have taken these obligations seriously.

The Soviet philosophical effort toward an understanding of the nature of war merits special attention, not least because it has but the palest of counterparts in the West. Rather than comprising merely a number of general principles or axioms and a storehouse of historical records, the Soviet effort claims the status of a complete science with natural laws and extensive theory governing all aspects of armed conflict and national mobilization for war. A number of senior Soviet officers and theoreticians have achieved high academic rank through their research and writings in the field, and they enjoy substantial respect and prestige for their work.<sup>6</sup>

Soviet bookstores bulge with volumes on military history and military theory which would probably be of little interest in the West. Rather than splashy exposés of Defense Ministry mismanagement, these publications methodically document great military achievements (largely from the latter years of the Great Patriotic War) and discuss the value of Marxist-Leninist thought in solving military problems. Some 17 of these books constitute "the Officer's Library," providing the reader with officially sanctioned examinations of a broad range of military subjects, from mathematical forecasting to fundamentals of troop command and control. The Military Publishing House (Voyenizdat) publishes some 200 titles each year.

The Soviets trace the origins of their military intellectual effort to the second half of the 19th century. Marx and Engels, they believe, caused revolutionary changes in all of the social sciences (including military science) with the discovery of the materialist understanding of history. In the 20th century, the Soviets point to the great captains and prolific writers from their civil war period as the prophets of the concept of "unified military doctrine." Mikhail V. Frunze, later to become Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the USSR, wrote in 1921 that there had been a substantial change in the nature of wars, from comparatively small conflicts, fought largely by professional forces, to great cataclysmic events, incorporating much larger proportions of the populations of nations. He argued that the prevailing state of development of military art and science was completely unclear in this matter and that much was needed to be done in the way of conceptually unifying, integrating, and coordinating forces in order to recapture the leader's capacity for effective direction.<sup>9</sup> "In a number of armies," he wrote, "this work of producing unity of thought and will is extremely complex and difficult, and it can proceed successfully only when it follows a plan and rests on clearly formulated premises and is sanctioned by the public opinion of the country's ruling class. From this it is clear what tremendous practical significance the teaching about a 'unified military doctrine' has for the entire matter of the [Soviet Socialist] Republic's military organizational development."<sup>10</sup>

Five years later, Marshal Mikhail N. Tukhachevskiy, the youngest officer to command an army in 1918 (at the age of 25), reinforced Frunze's argument for creation of a complete science of war. "Modern conditions," he wrote, "persistently demand that we create a science of war, which has not existed to date. Individual essays involving this issue . . . only indicated the importance of such a science and did not invest it with any specific form."<sup>10</sup>

We should note, of course, that in such a unified concept, terminology plays an important part. The Soviets have been extremely careful in the development of their theory to develop serviceable lexicons to match. As a result, Soviet strategic debates, while substantially less free-wheeling than in the West and often couched in ideological and historical analogies,

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*"Only after we overthrow, completely defeat,  
and expropriate the bourgeoisie in the entire  
world . . . will wars become impossible."*

*— Lenin*

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enjoy a precision which many Western writers, more comfortable with manipulative ambiguity, would find unduly constrictive. We should also note that such debates in the Soviet Union are conducted almost exclusively among the professional military rather than among a civilian elite, as is the norm in the United States and elsewhere in the West. The dominant practical effect of this in the USSR is to hold the issues within a narrower range than that to which Westerners are accustomed. Marxist-Leninist military theory, as it has evolved, is not without practical purpose. It is intended to support analysis of current problems and to provide a theoretical interpretation of the development of the armed forces. It is also intended to support attempts to foresee the future.<sup>11</sup>

**S**oviet military science is defined as "a unified system of knowledge about preparation for and waging of war in the interests of the defense of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries against imperialist aggression."<sup>12</sup> Within military science are seven major branches or disciplines: a general branch and six others covering military art, training and education, military history, administration, geography, and the technical services.<sup>13</sup>

The general theory of military science is the integrative branch, and contains conclusions and principles which serve as guides for study in the other branches. The Soviets believe that battles and campaigns are won or lost for identifiable reasons, and not simply by chance. They also believe that organized study, particularly of military history, reveals patterns which provide insight into objective laws regarding the nature of combat.<sup>14</sup> The laws are not considered immutable, but subject to modification during the course of historical evolution. A law they had established regarding the relationship of strategy to tactics is a case in point. Whereas the outcome of actions at the strategic level had traditionally been considered dependent upon progress at the tactical level, the Soviets came to revise their views following introduction of nuclear weapons and long-range strike systems. In 1973, Marshal V. G. Kulikov, later to become Commander-in-Chief of the Combined Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact, wrote, "The dependence of strategic successes on operational results and of operational successes on tactical results has changed under these conditions. There is now the possibility of directly influencing the course and outcome of operations and of a war as a whole by using the powerful resources at the disposal of the higher headquarters. . . . By using its own resources, [the strategic leadership] can also strive to accomplish strategic missions before operational or tactical missions are accomplished."<sup>15</sup>

One of the most important tasks of the general theory of military science is to establish the interrelationships of the various branches or disciplines which constitute the science and to identify those which are

considered key to the whole field. The theory of military art is deemed the most important component, actually comprising an entire set of disciplines itself, namely, strategy, operational art, and tactics. These three form a scale of complex areas of study in the Soviet scheme to which great effort is directed.<sup>16</sup>

There are substantial differences between the traditional US and Soviet concepts of tactics and strategy. Until very recently, the United States did not recognize the intermediate level, operational art, at all. Even today, it would appear that the two powers continue to harbor quite different notions of what each of the components comprises.

The original American construct probably came from Clausewitz, who recognized only two levels of the military art, tactics and strategy. He argued that the division of the two areas had wide acceptance, if not wide understanding. "The distinction between tactics and strategy is now almost universal," he wrote, "and everyone knows fairly well where each particular factor belongs, without clearly understanding why." He thought that there was merit in the bi-level formula, if only because it was in common usage. "Tactics," he wrote, "*teaches the use of armed forces in the engagement; strategy, the use of engagements for the object of war*"<sup>17</sup> (emphasis in the original).

But the American concept is broader than that. As Edward Mead Earle pointed out, "strategy . . . is not merely a concept of wartime, but is an inherent element of statecraft at all times. Only the most restricted terminology would now define strategy as the art of military command. In the present-day world, then, strategy is the art of controlling and utilizing the resources of a nation—or a coalition of nations—including its armed forces, to the end that its vital interests shall be effectively promoted and secured against enemies, actual, potential, or merely presumed. The highest type of strategy—sometimes called grand strategy—is that which integrates the policies and armaments of the nation so that the resort to war is either rendered unnecessary or is undertaken with the maximum chance of victory."<sup>18</sup>

The Soviets do not seem to have a larger concept of strategy comparable to Earle's formulation—at least not under that name. Instead, they rely on what they call their "military doctrine" to provide the basic guidance for military strategy. This is a compendium of the directives and views of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on all aspects of the activities of the state in wartime, and amounts to a statement of the political policy of the party and the government on military affairs.<sup>19</sup>

The Soviets point out key differences between military science and military doctrine. For one thing, military science is considered to be derived by analysis of objective laws, while military doctrine is based on the theoretical data of military science and the political principles of the state.

For another, military science relies on past events, while doctrine does not. Science is always subject to debate and interpretation. Doctrine never is. This does not mean that doctrine does not change. It does, but it is changed only by the highest decisionmaking body of the party—not by a process of discussion among academics.<sup>20</sup>

Soviet military doctrine is considered to interact with strategy. Strategy, as theory, feeds the development of doctrine; at the same time, strategy implements doctrine and is the instrument for war plans and the preparation of the country for war. In wartime, military doctrine drops into the background somewhat, and military strategy governs the execution of armed combat.<sup>21</sup> This is not to say that strategy ever supplants policy as the first consideration of the Soviet leadership. Marshal Kulikov made it quite clear that that is not the case in an article included in the "Officer's Library" series. The article's selection is a clear indication of its official acceptability. "Policy," he wrote, "sets tasks for military strategy, and strategy fulfills them. Policy, in turn, takes strategic proposals into account, but policy requirements always remain supreme."<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, we should recognize the practice of quasi-militarization of the Soviet civilian leadership in wartime, a practice which places virtually everyone of significance in uniform. The close integration of military and party leadership in the Soviet system permits a high degree of flexibility in shifting from political emphasis to military emphasis. As the Soviets see it (and as MacArthur described it, paradoxically enough), the object in war is victory. This object is most expeditiously achieved when military factors are given high priority and other factors are placed in appropriate perspective.

Soviet military doctrine is unabashedly offensive. It does not call upon Soviet forces to strike the first blow (necessarily), but it does require



**"Soviet military doctrine is unabashedly offensive."**

that they act in the most offensive fashion possible to defeat the enemy once the battle is joined. It assigns the decisive role in war to nuclear missiles, but it takes a comprehensive, combined arms view of force requirements for armed conflict. Finally, the Soviets consider their military doctrine as applicable to the entire socialist community.<sup>23</sup> In contrast to the laborious procedures required for coordination of political-military policies in NATO, the Soviets have contrived an efficient means for coordination of the strategies of the various Warsaw Pact states. The extent to which it would actually operate in war-time (witness Romania's flirtations with self-assertiveness) is a matter of some conjecture.

**I**n the United States we have become accustomed to a much greater degree of flexibility in the language of strategic literature than that used in the Soviet Union. The terminology is often rather freely applied to deal with whatever issues the author may have in mind. While there are recognizable differences between "strategy" and "tactics," both terms are used with sufficient elasticity to describe many aspects of problems and in various contexts. For the most part, the adjective "strategic" has come to connote for us matters of global or superpower-to-superpower scope. Insofar as weapons are concerned, the term commonly pertains to those of intercontinental range. The word "tactical," on the other hand, usually has purely intra-theater applications.

It is important to note these practices because they illustrate a prominent difficulty in communications between East and West. Clearly, the Soviets have a different perception of the proximity of threats to their territorial security than does the United States. For the Soviets, the principal protagonist may be situated on the opposite side of the globe on the North American continent, but that does not define the full extent of their "strategic" concerns. They perceive a ring of states on or near their borders which have at one time or another posed serious security threats to the homeland, and could again at some time in the future. These threats are every bit as "strategic" in the Soviet mind as any posed from the Western Hemisphere.

A prominent manifestation of this difference in definitions is the difficulty the major powers have had in achieving accords on arms control. Whereas the American instinct has been to seek a balance between weapon systems based on home territory or at sea, targeted at the opponent's homeland, the Soviet instinct has been to seek a balance between systems targeted at the opponent's territory, wherever they may be stationed. Thus while the Soviets perceive a "strategic" threat from Western Europe, including from US forward-based nuclear systems, Americans consider forces deployed in West Europe as part of a more "tactical" calculus—that of NATO's deterrent vis-à-vis the Warsaw Pact.

The difference in definitions is most evident in the classification of levels of activity in military operational matters. As we have noted, the Soviets recognize three major fields under the theory of military art: strategy, operational art, and tactics. Yossef Bodansky describes the Soviet view of "strategic" matters as those which are intended to be decisive in the conflict as a whole. Those which they believe might be decisive in a campaign, he says, are referred to as "operational," and those which might affect the outcome of one or more battles as "tactical."<sup>24</sup>

As a matter of normal practice, fronts (comparable to NATO army groups) and field armies are considered operational, while units of division size and smaller are deemed tactical. This construct has made sense in a historical context. Armies and fronts, numbering anywhere from 50,000 to a quarter of a million men, have certainly had the means for influencing the outcomes of campaigns. Divisions and lesser units have normally had less impact. But there are exceptions. In the case of the Operational Maneuver Group, the force size may not be larger than that of a division, but the intent of the force is to strike deeply into enemy territory to *operational depth* and to accomplish missions of *operational significance*. Thus the terminology depends upon purpose rather than size in this instance, representing an important departure from our common assumption that the Soviets define the levels of war by rigid association with particular echelons of command.

As for the necessity for development of unified military theory, Americans tend to take a more relaxed attitude than their Soviet counterparts. For the most part, they subscribe to the Clausewitzian formula that "theory should be study, not doctrine." Clausewitz argued that "theory exists so that one need not start afresh each time sorting out the material and plowing through it, but will find it ready to hand and in good order. It is meant to educate the mind of the future commander, or, more accurately, to guide him in his self-education, not to accompany him to the battlefield; just as a wise teacher guides and stimulates a young man's intellectual development, but is careful not to lead him by the hand for the rest of his life."<sup>25</sup>

No honest critic of American strategic thinking would ever fault our literature for lack of imagination, conviction, or concern for maintenance of the peace. American officials and, more particularly, analysts in the private sector have shown little reluctance to investigate any significant area of pertinence to national security. If there is a weakness, it may lie in a lack of understanding of what it is that the Soviets are after with their unified theories of military art and doctrine. It is evident that the Soviets have been on the trail of a vision which is a great deal clearer to them than it is to many of us.

There are several possible explanations for this. One is that the vision draws a good bit of its value from the same wellhead from which the

Soviets draw their socialist ideology. Each writer makes substantial effort to wrap his thoughts in the saintly robes of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Whether this is simple window-dressing for legitimation's sake, or indicates a real dependency, is less clear. If one cannot have a unified theory of the art of war without embracing Hegel, so to speak, there is little reason for those in a Western democracy to worry about the lack. If, on the other hand, functional students of Clausewitz with a bias against war as a choice of early resort can develop such a unified theory in context with liberal Western beliefs, the matter may be worth addressing. If, to carry the point one step further, there is indeed practical value to be gained from the effort, then we may be seriously remiss in not pursuing it.

Another possible reason that the vision is clouded for us in the West is the earlier noted one that strategic debates in the Soviet Union are conducted among military professionals, not on the street. The participants in the USSR are members of a brotherhood which attaches importance to such matters as order, comprehensiveness, and long-range planning. Unlike the politician, or his adviser from academia, the soldier seldom comes to his appointment with a radical agenda.

Considering the civilian dominance of American strategic thought, it should not be surprising to find less inclination for structured thinking on substantive issues. Rather than treating topical matters as parts of a larger scheme of things, as might be expected among professionals, there is a tendency in the American political milieu to treat them as discrete issues to be debated, settled on their own narrow merits as soon as possible, and then forgotten until world events force them upon the public's attention once again. Esoteric relationships between issues often get short shrift on Capitol Hill. Theory without obvious and quick payoff is not normally the politician's strong suit.

Still another possible explanation is a tendency among academics to overlook the intellectual worth of efforts in the defense area, except as they can be tied to established disciplines. There are well over 150 fields of graduate study in the United States, including game management, home economics, and ornamental horticulture.\* But there are precious few (if any) universities granting graduate degrees in military science. It would be difficult in such an atmosphere to develop much momentum toward construction of unified military theory.

It would strain the scope of this essay to explore the potential benefits to the US Army for its long-delayed embrace of the Soviet concept of the operational level of war. Suffice to say, they are substantial, but are likely to become evident only as the concept becomes better understood through serious thought, experiment, and practice. Modest success in this one area could be cause for yet more ambitious investigation of some of the other formulations which our potential adversary has developed. As a

young nation which has distributed its wars with remarkable impartiality over the earth's seas and continents, we will be slow, if we are wise, to dismiss the ideas of an antagonist with centuries of experience in warfare on the vast Eurasian landmass. The ultimate success of the Atlantic Alliance may depend upon our choices.

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# False Dichotomies in the Defense Debate

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The catalogue of military strategists, planners, and operators has recently grown at a rate that far exceeds that of the national debt. Gideon, Sun Tzu, Caesar, Frederick, Vauban, Napoleon, Jomini, Clausewitz, Mahan, Douhet, and Mitchell have now been joined by Luttwak, Boyd, Canby, Record, Hart, Lind, Gabriel, Gingrich, Savage, a born-again Cincinnatus, and Packard. The contribution of these so-called reformers to the depth and increasing decibel level of the defense debate is not only relevant, it could be important. In a real sense, the growing awareness of shortcomings in US military capability—men, materiel, and method—is the essential prerequisite for developing and deploying those ever more scarce resources, tangible and intangible, needed to restore the military balance and ensure both liberty and peace. There are, however, inherent dangers in this “new discussion.”

The nation's security depends on initiative and clear thinking. We need new ideas on the application of force and we need to revisit some old ones. But we don't need creative bookkeeping or superficial historical single-factor analyses clothed in innovative semantics. The greatest weight, at least in terms of pounds, of the new discussion bears on a contrived and artificial distinction between attrition and maneuver. But the only doctrinaire advocacy of “pure attrition” or “pure maneuver” to be found anywhere is contained in the strawman constructed by the new discussants themselves. Maneuver and attrition are not and cannot be made to be contradictory opposites. They are complementary principles—principles like liberty and equality or free speech and national security. They require not a choice, but a balance.

The semantic games do not end here, however. The major challenge facing US policy is deterring Soviet attack. Our current military strategy requires that we accomplish this by deploying a ready, visible, and credible capability to defeat any such attack promptly and decisively. This is a dirty, dangerous, and dynamic task. Maintaining the synergistic interaction of mass, attrition, maneuver, and the other multiple, complex, and interrelated principles is the most dynamic aspect of the task. It is not made easier by postulating artificial distinctions among tactics, operational art, strategy, and grand strategy, then wasting time and talent fine-tuning the distinctions. We are seeing too much of this. In reality, the distinctions among the levels of war are far more apparent than real. They do not form a continuum, broken by clear lines to set off the levels. Rather, they interrelate like the five rings of the Olympic logo; each influences, is influenced by, and interlocks with the other.

The nature of the political objectives assigned NATO forces in Europe places limitations on military operational concepts. They are not to be deplored; they result from legitimate political objectives. Thus, regardless of what the armchair fellows would have us do, there will be no lightning thrust into the soft underbelly of Europe to separate industrial Russia from Georgia and the Ukraine. No sharp preemptive jab to pierce the iron curtain and free the Baltic states. No grandiose strategic withdrawal west of the Rhine. The task is to defend, *and to defend forward*. This provides the strategic envelope in which we must conduct operations. There is, from the Elbe to the Rhine, little space to trade for time. Thus the defense must be both visionary and constrained. It is silly to view it otherwise. To re-coin a phrase, we cannot destroy Europe in order to defend it.

Thus we must be prepared materially and doctrinally to see the whole battlefield; to concentrate at critical times and places; to shock, overwhelm, and destroy the enemy. We envision the battlefield to be an arena of hyperactive defense, displaying the characteristics of both attrition and maneuver. We strive to maintain highly favorable force attrition ratios. And we must use firepower, maneuver, mass, and, when possible, surprise

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and deception to achieve them. We have as a matter of alliance strategic policy conceded to the potential aggressor a choice of time and place; we cannot as a matter of technology or doctrine concede him anything else.

Even a cursory study of military history reveals that a willingness to accept constructive and calculated risks distinguishes the bold success from the timid failure. Our doctrine, nominally defensive and admitting of penetrations (risky, yes), is actually offensive if not explosive in character because it generates opportunities for striking the enemy's flanks. This principle is the essence of relational maneuver. But, to paraphrase Napoleon, in war, as in love, contact is required for conquest. One does not maneuver for maneuver's sake. One maneuvers for the same reason that a naval fleet crosses the T—to put maximum destructive fire on the enemy while minimizing one's own vulnerability.

We should not forget that maneuver carries potential deficits. Targets are acquired on the battlefield in many ways—sight, sound, smell, radar emissions, radio transmissions, heat, or movement. Remember how when Mauldin's Willy, in commenting to Joe about a tank, noted that a moving foxhole attracts the eye. Such is far truer today than then. Over-the-horizon radars and indirect fire weapons are drawn to maneuvering forces like flies to a dungheap. Although the numbers-versus-quality argument goes on, and discussions of tradeoffs to achieve the next technological step in marginal improvement are valid, it remains clear and non-controversial—Observation-Oriented-Decision-Action loops, beltloops, and defensive rings to the contrary notwithstanding—that technology-enhanced firepower does make a difference. We cannot replace the big guns associated with St. Barbara with the movement associated with St. Vitus.

It has been more than four decades since comparable forces belonging to major powers have engaged in combat. Thus, in spite of the prognosis made by strong-minded professionals and talented amateurs, we can draw only one dominant conclusion concerning the future battlefield: we cannot be certain what it will be like. The battlefield may well be very lethal. We know that in World War II in a tank-to-tank battle it took approximately 13 rounds to have a 50-50 chance of hitting a standing tank at 1500 meters. In Korea this was reduced to three rounds, and today we project that the single-shot kill probability will approach unity. On the other hand, it is conceivable that the Soviet Eighth Guards Army will electrocute itself, the US Third Infantry Division blow a fuse and go blind, and the British Army of the Rhine grind to a halt because someone pulled the plug. If all the counter-counter-countermeasures work, and they may, the force best able to employ observed artillery fire will have the advantage. In any event, the extension of technology and lethality to the battlefield is ignored at one's peril. They will affect our capacity for maneuver. Doctrine must optimize forces in being and those reasonably achievable. Vague lessons

from history concerning maneuver cannot be used to obscure the fact that changes in weaponry dictate changes in employment and manner of fighting. Such changes are slow because, as Mahan said, they have to overcome the inertia of a very conservative military caste. We cannot be ready to fight all kinds of wars every place, but we had best be prepared to fight most kinds, most places, or the sure result will be the failure of deterrence.

Concepts are not a substitute for capabilities and we cannot delude ourselves into believing they are. We must develop and deploy our defense weaponry using the Army Materiel Command, Air Force Systems Command, and Defense Logistics Agency, which are already in being. We cannot wait for high-powered groups such as Mr. Packard's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management to create a new system. Defense is neither cheap nor cheerful. Defending the country on the cheap is fine if it works, but doing more with less could lead eventually to the theory that you can do everything with nothing. Even with the best of concepts, war for many is a series of catastrophes that somehow result in victory. Strategic thought and doctrine are, in part, designed to reduce the impact of the fog, complexities, frictions, and unknowns on the outcome of the battle. Of course, surprise is a force multiplier—the first blow is worth at least two. Yes, deception is of central importance and can be achieved by doing the unexpected. But maxims, regardless of how old or how honored, cannot replace the tough thinking and hard choices involved. Barbara Tuchman lamented the fact that nothing so comforts the military mind as the maxim of a great but dead general. But it is the military subject apparently, not the military mind, which induces this affinity for maxims, since it is the civilian reformers who find them most appealing. Catchwords, even great ones like maneuver, don't defend Europe or preserve the peace.

The US Army today is, for the most part, led by combat-seasoned officers from the brigade level up. They have been educated and tested in combat, the roughest school of all. They nonetheless share with Sir Charles Napier the knowledge that "the soldier who bears the risk of the lives of men entrusted to his charge without making a study for his own education of the experience of the past, is a criminal more dangerous to his country than any murderer." And this study is assisted, despite popular dilettantist assertions, at every level of the Army education system, including the Army War College. Maybe not enough for everybody, but as the old sailor used to say, "You don't have to teach your grandmother how to suck eggs." History and tradition are not just important, they are indispensable. But that means holding the late lamp aloft and not worshipping the ashes.

Another falsely dichotomous issue that, like attrition and maneuver, requires a balance instead of a choice is leadership and management. One set of critics paints a disturbing picture of an Army

totally fascinated with management techniques. They ask, "Where have the warriors gone?" Another set points to the disappointments of the Army's weapons procurement process and wonders why our first-class people don't go into the acquisition field. The present system gave us the late Sergeant York air defense gun and the Bradley fighting vehicle. Wags tell us the former knew its job, but wouldn't work, and the latter has no job, but does it slowly. We must provide weapons developed, designed, and manufactured for soldiers, not for engineers or bureaucrats. But again the answer is not that simple. Combat leadership and management techniques are but two sides of the same coin. Clausewitz said,

We see clearly that the activities characteristic of war may be split into two main categories: those that are preparation for war, and war proper . . . . The knowledge and skills involved in the preparation will be concerned with the creation, training, and maintenance of the fighting forces . . . . The theory of war proper, on the other hand, is concerned with the use of these means, once they have been developed, for the purpose of the war.

To ignore either of these categories is to court disaster. Just such a disaster occurred in the Spanish-American War, when our Army, lacking proper management techniques, was so ill-prepared for war that soldiers suffered for want of food, clothing, and shelter. One of the reasons the Army War College was founded shortly thereafter was to reconcile techniques for the preparation for war with techniques for the conduct of war itself. This reconciliation is more difficult today than it was at the turn of the century. Regardless, the needs and requirements of the user must become paramount. The GS-14 paper-shuffling, hammer-school dropout must be replaced by a high-level procurement professional with judgment who knows why we have procurement and cares.

Good men can be attached to bad principles; decent men may become trapped in brilliant misconceptions. This may stem, in many ways, from the difference between the real world of responsibility and the fanciful world of the onlookers. But the idea that you can merchandise strategic concepts or management policies like breakfast cereals, that you can create a deterrent force out of mirrors, is the ultimate indignity to thought, especially to professional military thought. A cheap solution to the military balance is like a declaration of love without a promise of marriage—it has great attractions in the short run, but far greater limitations in the long run, and represents a prescription for defeat—defeat in detail.

The defense debate is healthy. It is open to professionals, uniformed and civilian, dedicated dilettantes (they come in both suits too), and talented amateurs. It is open to all. Without it, we risk losing our awareness. With it we risk losing our azimuth. But nobody promised that making national security policy in a democracy was a rose garden.

## *View From The Fourth Estate*

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### The Military: A Loose Cannon?

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

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1986 *Harper's Magazine*

There comes a time in the troubled course of human affairs when we must step back and examine the fundamental concepts by which our public attitudes and policies are guided. This, I am persuaded, is now needed as regards the weapons race. In particular, and urgently, we must recognize that military power has become an independent force on both sides of the superpower relationship.

There is now a dynamic that serves the interests of the military in each of the two great powers—each takes actions that produce responding actions in the other. One country's military must do something because it is what the other's military is doing, or intends to do. Thus each military power builds on the other. And so on to the eventual catastrophe.

In the United States, the first source of the military's power is the belief that all government instruments are subject to the democratic process. This belief is strong in our rhetoric; it is what our children are still taught in school. But it is, in fact, something that no fully informed citizen can believe. The modern military establishment extensively controls the democratic process. In the organization it possesses, the money it deploys, the captive politicians it commands, the scientific community it subsidizes, the military has become a force in its own right. It employs 4.5 million people and last year generated over \$146 billion in business for private enterprise. The military now has in its embrace the civilian authority to which legally and constitutionally it is presumed to be subject.

I do not speak with equal authority of the military power in the Soviet Union. There it will be said with no slight emphasis—just as we say it in the United States—that the military is fully subject to the larger authority of the state. Alas, no great organization is ever without power; it is not in the nature of a bureaucracy to submit passively to external control or fail to assert its claims on society.

The rise and awesome triumph of this military power have profoundly altered our society. The most significant effect arises from the need of any military power for an enemy—a plausible enemy. In the absence of such, a military's influence and, more pertinently, its financial support are gravely at risk.

The United States in the last century and again in the years between the world wars had no plausible military adversary. As a result, the American military establishment had negligible power and resources—our army in that period was on a par with that of Portugal. This condition has been remedied. In recent years enemies have been manifestly more available—or have been made so. China, until it was promoted to its current role as an honorary bastion of free enterprise, for a time so served: the atomic yellow peril. North Vietnam, Cuba, and Nicaragua have functioned as enemies. We also have Colonel Qaddafi. But overwhelmingly and durably, the plausible enemy has been the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union is indispensable to the military power in the United States. Tension in our relations with the Russians directly and overtly serves that power, and any relaxation of tension would diminish the resources it commands. Military appropriations were once made in response to external threat. But let us not now be in doubt: action and response have been reversed. External threat is now in the service of military appropriations and weapons development.

A second circumstance, one we must note, derives from the military's need to contend with the main threat to its power in our time: the deep, even urgent, public fear that modern nuclear weaponry, by its nature, arouses. In all countries, and not least in the United States, there is strong resistance to the idea of nuclear euthanasia. So just as the military power must have a plausible enemy, so also it must have a plausible design for countering the public threat. This is what arms-control negotiations principally accomplish. Rather than limit or even reduce the chance of nuclear destruction, negotiations serve to contain and quiet the public fear of nuclear destruction.

Once again, I do not identify these grim developments peculiarly with the United States. The charge that the United States poses a grave imperialist threat to the world comes regularly from the Soviet Union. There is recurrent mention of sinister capitalist intentions. In both countries, tension and hostility serve military purpose and power.

They serve, let us note, in a world where the presumption that underlies the very word "superpower" is now strongly in question. That presumption is of a relentless extension of power by both the Soviet Union and the United States—in the Soviet view, of America's unfulfilled imperialist ambition; in the accepted American view, of a move to world socialist domination by the Soviet Union. The highly evident reality, in contrast, is the powerful desire on the part of all countries of the

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

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world, without exception, to assert and preserve their independence, to be free of superpower influence and control.

This, over the last twenty-five years, has been the Soviet experience in China, Egypt, Algeria, and Ghana. Also in Indonesia and, in visible measure, Eastern Europe. And Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and South Yemen are not masterpieces of socialist achievement; Marx would be appalled at the thought of socialism at their stage of development—of socialism before there is capitalism.

Similarly, the thrust for independence is or has been the experience of the United States in Central and South America, in Iran, elsewhere in the Middle East, and, notably and sadly, in Vietnam.

Nonetheless, Soviet spokesmen still speak of America's imperialist design, and we of the Soviet quest for world domination. The purpose I cannot think in doubt. The imagery of socialist and imperialist expansion serves the military power in both countries. The hard fact of retreat must be kept quiet.

To summarize, our present situation is not military need in response to tension and hostility; it is tension and hostility in the service of military need.

As I earlier noted, international tranquillity is not the only threat to military power; in the age of nuclear alarm and terror there is also a strong public concern for continued existence. This has made itself evident in the United States in the freeze movement, which has alarmingly invaded the preserve of the arms-control theologians.

I have been sufficiently in the Soviet Union to know that the same sensitivity to the threat of nuclear war exists strongly in the Russian mind. Twice in this century the Soviet Union has been the victim of war. We have not. Russians see themselves as victims; we think of ourselves as the people who escape.

Contemplating death, all people resort to psychological denial. This they do where nuclear war is concerned. This the arms negotiations have allowed them to do. In consequence, the nuclear theologians have maintained their monopoly of the arms-control issue. In the United States this monopoly is an extraordinary thing. We do not readily delegate power over taxes; we are rather relieved to delegate it over death. This delegation we must now withdraw.

The United States and the Soviet Union have lived together peacefully, if not always amicably, for almost seventy years. We can conclude that capitalism and socialism can coexist. But they cannot and will not coexist if they yield to the military power. In the premeditated or unpremeditated nuclear collision that the present condition assures, neither capitalism nor socialism will survive. And no one, not even the most talented ideologue, will be able to tell the ashes of capitalism from the ashes of socialism.

*—Reprinted from Harper's Magazine, November 1986, pp. 13-15.*

## Commentary & Reply

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### ON STILWELL AND GALAHAD IN BURMA

#### To the Editor:

I am writing with respect to Scott R. McMichael's article "Common Man, Uncommon Leadership: Colonel Charles N. Hunter with Galahad in Burma," which appeared in the Summer 1986 issue of *Parameters*. During World War II, I was with Mountbatten in the Southeast Asia Command, and of course I followed with some degree of success the various operations within the Stilwell command, the Chinese, and the British. I made it my business to question many noncommissioned officers of the Galahad group, and I am delighted that McMichael paid such a wonderful tribute to Colonel Hunter, which, judging by the information provided by these many enlisted men under his command, is richly deserved. It is my considered opinion that Colonel Hunter was treated miserably. I say this without demeaning one iota the leadership of General Merrill, whose health was failing and not much later caused his death. However, General Stilwell did not recognize the merits and the wonderful attributes of leadership of Colonel Hunter. This was so aptly described to me by many enlisted men who served under him when the going was rough and required skillful and sound tactics.

General A. C. Wedemeyer, USA Ret.

#### To the Editor:

Major Scott McMichael's essay on the achievements of Colonel Charles N. Hunter in North Burma, January-August 1944, is critical of Hunter's commander, then Lieutenant General Joseph W. Stilwell. McMichael brings so many charges against Stilwell that the article reads like the postmortem of a defeat rather than an analysis of what was a resounding victory. Since much of McMichael's article draws upon information taken from my volume *Stilwell's Command Problems*, the official Army history of these episodes, I feel a special obligation to set the record straight.

McMichael indicts Stilwell's staff for "poor planning, lack of coordination, indifference to troop welfare . . . and other indications of incompetence." One indication of staff incompetence cited by McMichael is that of poor air supply. Galahad's entire operational concept was based on mobility made possible by air supply. Going on air supply is not like stepping into a grocery store; a great deal of planning and preparation is necessary. In accordance with prevailing US doctrine, Stilwell's corps was a task force with no organic logistical elements. Moreover, this was the US Army's first venture in large-scale air supply. Manuals, training, and experience did not exist. Initially, aircraft were allocated on the basis of advance estimates of a month's requirements in terms of air supply tonnage.

In practice, commanders were unable to estimate their needs 15 to 45 days in advance. Stilwell's corps G-4 was forever asking Eastern Air Command to alter its schedules, with parallel calls to Services of Support to reshape its priorities accordingly. When problems with air supply persisted, Brigadier General Haydon Boatner, corps Chief of Staff, jumped channels and addressed China, Burma, and India (CBI) Theater Headquarters. Boatner pointed out that although he had 14,000 men on air supply forward of the roadhead, the Galahad regiment of infantry, the Chindit 16th Brigade, and the Chinese 1st Provisional Tank Group (-) had arrived with no augmentation of his air resources. When the situation did not improve, Boatner went to Stilwell. On 11 February 1944 Stilwell radioed Major General Stratemeyer that supply aircraft had been diverted without prior notice and that he was relying on Stratemeyer to see that "a failure in air supply did not interfere with his operations." To Stratemeyer, Stilwell's corps was but one of four corps requiring support. Stilwell's intervention had no discernible effect. The problem was months, not weeks, in being solved. The final decision reached in May was that Stilwell's corps G-4 would institute and operate a system of priorities.

The arrival of the monsoon rains in May effectively concealed the long-term advantages of this arrangement. I saw but one mention of these rains by McMichael, but the rains that began pouring down on Burma (averaging some 200 inches a year) were a major factor in military operations. All-weather flying was in its infancy in 1944; nine wrecked transport aircraft soon lay about the borders of the Myitkyina airstrip. This was the better part of a squadron. There were times when delivery had to stop. "Not a thing I can do," wrote Stilwell on 22 May 1944 (five days after the field was taken). "It has been raining all morning. We can't get troops in, also the field is in bad shape at Mitch . . . if the goddam rain will only let us use the field for a few days. . . ."

As weather permitted, and despite Stratemeyer's exercising his prerogative as commander of Eastern Air Command to fly in anti-aircraft cover, Stilwell continued the flow of reinforcements. McMichael says Stilwell failed to reinforce and calls this "Stilwell's niental lapse which no one has ever satisfactorily explained." I do not understand this statement because in the first three days Stilwell flew in all of the Chinese 89th Regiment plus the 3/42d. In all, by 19 May the 150th, 88th, and 89th Regiments plus the 3/42d were there. The USAF history drily notes that in the beginning daily landings of transport aircraft were limited to 25 or less. The airmen thought that Stilwell's greatest fear then was that air supply might fail, probably because of Stilwell's earlier protestations. These episodes show that contrary to Major McMichael's assertion that "Stilwell and his staff failed miserably to control the flow of reinforcements into Myitkyina [thus showing] indifference to troop welfare," Stilwell and his staff labored on in a complex situation where they were but one part.

Another charge McMichael raises is that "the staff even failed to keep *Stilwell* [McMichael's emphasis] informed about the condition of the US and British troops under his command." This indictment is not supported by Merrill's recollections nor by Stilwell's records. More than 30 years ago, on a manuscript of *Stilwell's Command Problems*, Merrill wrote:

In giving Merrill his orders for the march, Stilwell stated that he knew he was calling on Galahad for more effort than could fairly be expected, but that he had no other option. In the light of that, *and the exhaustion of the unit* [emphasis added], he authorized Merrill to begin evacuating Galahad "without further order if everything worked out as expected."

Merrill recalled relaying this message to Galahad and that it encouraged the men to make the last desperate but successful effort to seize the Myitkyina airstrip.

McMichael echoes Hunter's criticism of Stilwell for not issuing written operations orders. Stilwell thought such procedures were obsolete. Under the leadership and tutelage of George C. Marshall at Fort Benning, when Marshall was head of the Academic Department of the Infantry School, Stilwell learned and taught the overriding importance of speed and simplicity for decisions, plans, and orders. Forrest C. Pogue's biography, *George C. Marshall: Education of a General*, gives a magisterial discussion of these matters in Chapter XV.

One must also disagree with Major McMichael's writing of Stilwell: "He had no feel for soldiers, sending them to die, seemingly without an inkling of what they might suffer." I cannot reconcile this with Stilwell's own words:

Generals get sharply criticized. They are the birds who shelter themselves in dugouts and send the soldiers out to get killed. They cover themselves with medals, won at the expense of the lives of their men, who are thrown in regardless, to compensate for faulty or poorly thought-out plans. . . . The private carries the woes of one man; the general carries the woes of all. He is conscious always of the responsibility on his shoulders, of the relatives of the men entrusted to him, and of their feelings. He must act so that he can face those fathers and mothers without shame or remorse. How can he do this? By constant care, by meticulous thought and preparation, by worry, by insistence on high standards in everything, by reward and punishment, by impartiality, by an example of calm and confidence. It all adds up to character.

In several ways Stilwell did fall short of the standard of character he set for himself. But not in this instance. He cared about his men, but he treated others as he was content the world should treat him.

McMichael tells us that after Galahad and its associated Chinese regiments seized the Myitkyina airstrip the morning of 17 May, the fact "that there was no immediate plan to take the town of Myitkyina once the airfield fell is incredible." It is both incredible and contradicted by the British and American official histories. They agree that after the airstrip was occupied ("immediately after" says the British; "on the afternoon of 17 May" says the American) two battalions of the Chinese 150th Regiment attacked Myitkyina. The Chinese lost their way, fought each other, and drove themselves back out of Myitkyina. At noon of the 18th, the entire 150th attacked, and repeated the scenario. On the 20th the 150th reached the Myitkyina railroad yard but could advance no farther.

Having lost about half its strength in the previous six weeks, the regiment had to withdraw and reorganize.

My own errors and omissions have not helped consideration of Stilwell's views and acts regarding British reinforcements for his task force. In *Stilwell's Command Problems*, page 233, I described how, when Stilwell failed to take Myitkyina in the first five days, he considered asking for the British 36th Division, and how the topic then disappeared from his writings. This is true but misleading. The confusion has been compounded by several authors not using the official British histories. Shelford Bidwell in *The Chindit War* (New York, Macmillan, 1979) and Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War, 1941-1945* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1984) show no awareness of Volume III, page 404, of the British history. With McMichael, they accuse Stilwell of refusing to ask for the British 36th Division, described as combat-ready and at Stilwell's disposal. My writing that the topic disappeared from Stilwell's papers is seen as somehow corroborating this, which is then blamed on Stilwell's Anglophobia.

When Charley Romanus and I were preparing Stilwell's eyes-only file for publication in 1972, I found I had overlooked Stilwell's 27 May appeal for British reinforcements. My first reactions were distress and embarrassment. My next thoughts were of damage control. Looking at copies of the official British histories, I was relieved to find that in 1961 they published summaries of Stilwell's plea and Southeast Asia Command's (SEAC) reply.

In a handwritten message given to his code clerk, Stilwell on 27 May asked his deputy theater commander, Major General Daniel I. Sultan, to tell Mountbatten:

British withdrawal from Hopin block has opened the door to the Japs. If Louis expects Myitkyina to be held at all costs, will he help hold it? Suppose weather continues bad and I can't find troops. Will he give me the parachute regiment?

That same day he received from Sultan a summary of SEAC's reply. The paratroopers were currently engaged with the Japanese invading India. As for SEAC's other Army assets, the 36th Indian Division was on the Arakan front. An amphibious assault unit, it was to convert to a standard three-brigade British division. The summary stated: "The first brigade of this division might be ready by the end of June, but the whole division would not [report] before the middle of July." Stilwell's silence may be seen as concurrence; it is not clear what else he could do. The estimated dates of readiness, as so often, proved optimistic.

Another contention with McMichael is whether Stilwell ruthlessly "extracted every conceivable ounce of military utility" and could have withdrawn Galahad at an earlier date. Regardless of any commitments that the War Department or Wingate might originally have made to CBI Headquarters regarding a 90-day mission for Galahad, Stilwell always had to consider Chinese reactions. If the Chinese had been angered by withdrawing Americans from the hardships and dangers the Chinese bore, the results would have been incalculable. As it was, from 11 April to 6 May, Chinese progress down the Mogaung Valley was very slow. About 12 May, Japanese General Tanaka and the 18th Division

heard that the great Japanese drive on the Center Front was a disaster. The Myitkyina airstrip was overrun on 17 May and on the 19th the commander of the Chinese 38th Division said: "We go on to take Kamaing now," implying that he would open a ground avenue to Myitkyina. Galahad's presence may have been critical.

Was Myitkyina worth Galahad's suffering? Yes, emphatically. When Stilwell's troops stood on the airstrip on 17 May, a shorter southern air route from India to China over lower terrain was a reality. Simultaneously, better maintenance of more and better aircraft on the Hump route materialized. This potent combination lifted Hump tonnage from 13,686 in May 1944 to 25,454 in July. This radically improved the US position in China. Further, occupation of the Mogaung-Myitkyina area meant that as soon as the pipeline and the Ledo Road reached it, the Allies would have a supply base on the road and rail net of Burma close to China itself.

Riley Sunderland  
Bar Harbor, Maine

**To the Editor:**

I have more than a passing interest in this article by Major Scott McMichael since I commanded the 2nd Battalion, 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional)/Merrill's Marauders/Galahad throughout the unit's participation in the Northern Burma Campaign of 1944. Accordingly, I am personally knowledgeable concerning the history of the 5307th from its inception to the conclusion of its participation as a unit in the campaign. I am also well informed on Colonel Hunter's role during this period and his contribution to the unit's effort.

It is obvious that the author has been handicapped by the lack of any sound, factual, and objective accounts of the life and activities of the 5307th both prior to and during the combat period. As a result, he has been led far astray by those few accounts upon which he has relied, mainly Hunter's own account, *Galahad*, and Ogburn's story, *The Marauders*, neither of which meet the criteria of factuality and objectivity.

The author presents a grossly exaggerated picture of Colonel Hunter's role and importance and in so doing defames the character and reputation of a fine soldier and individual, General Joseph W. Stilwell, and discredits the outstanding commander of the 5307th, Brigadier Frank D. Merrill.

There is little in the article that I can relate to the facts as I know them, and it contains so many misconceptions, inaccuracies, and distortions of fact concerning the 5307th that the task of dealing with them in detail would be a major undertaking. I will discuss only a few of the article's inaccuracies.

*The Ninety-Day Limit.* The 5307th was composed entirely of officers and soldiers who had volunteered unconditionally for a hazardous duty assignment. The War Department promised them nothing whatsoever. A period of 90 days was mentioned in training literature on Long Range Penetration Operations as a planning figure based on the Wingate experience in 1943. It was nothing more than that. Obviously the factors that would determine the length of time that we

would be involved in the campaign were our state of combat effectiveness and military necessity. General Wingate never promised the American battalions a 90-day limit on operations nor did anyone else.

*Stilwell's Feelings for the 5307th.* Major McMichael writes, "The great man failed to make an appearance and so missed an opportunity to encourage the unit." As the battalions moving at a day's interval were arriving in the Shingbwiyang area, General Stilwell, dressed in baggy khakis and field jacket and wearing a peaked Chinese cap, sat in a jeep by the side of the road and watched one of the battalion columns move by. No fanfare, no histrionics, and no harassment, merely an old infantry hand evaluating what he had just reclaimed from the British. After the three battalions had closed in at the assembly area at Ningbyen, General Stilwell, accompanied by General Merrill, arrived unannounced one morning. He visited all three battalions, walked through the bivouac areas where men were occupied with drying out clothing and equipment and caring for weapons, and observed with evident interest the troop activity, making a quiet comment here and there but causing no flurry. The visit was carried out in an appropriate and effective manner and it accomplished all that needed to be done. He saw the troops and sized them up, and they saw him and appreciated his interest; both seemed well satisfied.

I had a high regard for General Stilwell throughout the campaign both as a professional soldier and a considerate individual. He has been dealt with unjustly and untruthfully as far as his relations with the 5307th were concerned. I know of no unreasonable demands that he ever placed on us, and the 2nd Battalion was subjected to the most difficult conditions. Nor do I know of any indications of a callous attitude towards us. To the contrary, he valued the few American troops he had and on which he must have felt he could always depend. To my personal knowledge, at Maingkwan after the Walawbum operation in which one of the battalions had been in a precarious position, he told General Merrill, "Never again let one of the battalions get in a position where it is going to be mauled and cut up; we have too few American troops and they are too valuable to take any chances of losing them unnecessarily."

*Hunter's Role.* During the Walawbum operation Hunter's post was the drop area at Wesu Ga, where he supervised airdrop recovery. He was not involved in the combat side of the operation.

Hunter did not plan the Inkangahtawng operation as the article implies. General Merrill did. Hunter's only role was that of General Merrill's liaison officer to Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) Headquarters to obtain from the NCAC staff General Stilwell's decision on General Merrill's recommendation that two regiments of the Chinese 38th Division accompany the 5307th (less the 1st Battalion) on the Inkangahtawng operation. General Merrill had already received General Stilwell's approval of the concept of the operation, and Lieutenant Colonel Osborne and I accompanied General Merrill to the 38th Division CP where he obtained General Sun Li-jen's agreement in the plan. However, the NCAC staff recommended against the participation of the two regiments and General Stilwell so decided. Hunter carried this word back to General Merrill.

Hunter received his first command assignment prior to the Inkangahtawng operation. General Merrill designated him to command a task force composed of the 2nd Battalion and one combat team of the 3rd Battalion. The mission of the task force was to establish a block on the Kamaing Road at Warazup, later changed to Inkangahtawng.

Hunter was ineffective in his first command experience. He issued no orders for the operation, and he did not accompany the task force to Inkangahtawng where the engagement took place. He elected to remain at Sharaw some 12 to 15 miles from Inkangahtawng. Experiencing a radio failure at the outset, he was out of communications with General Merrill and me throughout the operation. As a consequence, General Merrill and I communicated directly, and I commanded the task force until its dissolution. Obviously Hunter could not have commanded an action at Inkangahtawng from Sharaw even with good communications. At best he would have constituted an unnecessary link in the chain of command in what turned into a very fast developing and fast moving situation. As a result, Hunter was out of touch with what was going on throughout the operation, and he never exercised command nor took any actions nor issued any orders which influenced the course of events.

The Nhpum Ga battle followed on the heels of the Inkangahtawng operation. General Merrill had been ordered by the NCAC staff to establish a blocking position on the Auche-Nhpum Ga ridgeline to prevent a reported Japanese movement northward toward the Tanai Hka Valley. General Merrill ordered the 2nd Battalion to hold Nhpum Ga, and he moved the 3rd Battalion north some four miles to Hsamshingyang. Three Japanese battalions were committed to the task of taking Nhpum Ga. They encircled the 2nd Battalion position and two more or less separate actions resulted, the defense of Nhpum Ga by the 2nd Battalion and the effort to open the Hsamshingyang-Nhpum Ga trail by the 3rd Battalion. During the Nhpum Ga battle on 29 March, General Merrill suffered a heart attack and was evacuated. Command of the 5307th devolved on Hunter. Hunter was at Hsamshingyang and his involvement was with the 3rd Battalion's action to open the trail. The 3rd Battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Beach, a very capable, combat-experienced commander. Hunter's performance, as I viewed it from Nhpum Ga where I commanded the action, was of average quality. He was certainly no hero and the statement "Hunter had won" would stick in a lot of 2nd and 3rd Battalion craws.

By 6 April General Merrill was in overall control of the 5307th, and was then involved in the planning for the Myitkyina operation. On 17 May Hunter's force occupied the Sitapur airstrip near Myitkyina.

*Hunter's Letter to Stilwell.* On 27 May I read a copy of the letter which Hunter had composed on 24 May, shown to General McCammon, Myitkyina Task Force Commander, and presented to General Stilwell on 25 May. The letter was not likely to provide any encouragement to those two commanders when the outcome of the Myitkyina battle was hanging in the balance. To General Stilwell in particular it must have been a disappointing occurrence.

Hunter set forth a laundry list of complaints and gripes against General Stilwell and his headquarters which began with the arrival of the three battalions

in Bombay. Some were "water under the bridge" and now forgotten; others were petty and some I had never heard of before.

With the following comment on health and combat effectiveness, Hunter presented the only matter of immediate interest in his letter: "Repeated reports have been made reference to the health of the command. Apparently these reports are not believed, since no apparent effort has been made to verify this. It can be reiterated again that Galahad is practically ineffective as a combat unit at the present time, and its presence here as a unit is rapidly leading to a false sense of security, which is dangerous."

I was not aware of these repeated reports but it certainly was no secret that we had a declining health situation and deteriorating combat effectiveness. The number of men being evacuated to hospitals in India and their general physical condition were better indicators of the health situation than any number of reports would have been. General Stilwell's diary entries indicate that he was aware of the situation and was doing all he could to build up the American ground presence at Myitkyina by bringing in the engineers as well as infantry replacements which had arrived recently in India from the United States and were now at Ramgarh training center. I did not then know about this latter group.

Having presented this picture of the health and combat effectiveness of the 5307th, Hunter made no follow-up recommendation for action to cope with the situation. Rather, he then obtained, or so he considered, General Stilwell's tacit approval of his newly instituted evacuation policy, which was retaining sick men at Myitkyina. Evacuation required a soldier to run a fever of 102 degrees or more as certified by a board of doctors. Heretofore this was a matter handled strictly within the battalions. Some accounts would later attribute this policy to General Stilwell, others to General McCammon, and even some to General Boatner, who had not as yet arrived on the Myitkyina scene. Hunter, however, would later take "credit" for it, saying that he had discussed the matter with available battalion surgeons. He should have discussed it with the battalion commanders. It was an unwise and shortsighted expedient which contributed nothing to our combat effectiveness and predictably worsened the situation.

Hunter concluded his letter with four recommendations. Two of these were trivial: "That deserved promotions be awarded to officers of this command" and "That no other theater personnel be promoted as long as officers of this command are not promoted." The other two recommendations, however, were significant. They were also uncalled for and were a display of arrogance. They connoted problems that never existed and they could only have a demoralizing effect. The first of these recommendations was "That on the termination of the present operations, Galahad as an organization be disbanded, and its personnel be reassigned to other units in the theater through the Army Classification Service."

If more ignominious treatment of the three battalions and their volunteer personnel at the conclusion of the campaign could have been contrived, I could not visualize it. Hunter was recommending a humiliation. Having recommended this shabby treatment, Hunter now came on with this other recommendation:

That in the future American Infantry Combat Units assigned to this theater be treated in such a manner as to instill in the unit a pride of organization, a desire to fight, and a feeling of being part of a united effort, and further that every effort be made to overcome the feeling that such units are no better than Chinese troops, and deserving of no better treatment.

The implication here was that the 5307th lacked the characteristics which mark a unit as one with pride, high morale, and a high standard of performance of duty. It was as wrong a picture as could have been presented.

The gratuitous slur concerning the Chinese troops would not have sat well with General Stilwell, whose policy, as enunciated by General Merrill on various occasions, was that the Chinese would be accorded and treated with the respect due valued allies. This policy was so well known throughout the 5307th that Hunter's statement would seem to have been deliberately provocative. In any event, if he had not done so already, he probably shot himself in the foot by its inclusion.

Hunter's letter in no way reflected the mood and attitude of the 2nd Battalion or my own views. I resented his assuming that he had a proprietary right to speak on internal battalion matters for the battalion commanders without consulting them beforehand. The letter contained nothing worthwhile or appropriate to be passed on to the battalion. In fact, the two demeaning recommendations would have been most disturbing and discouraging.

McMichael's article is a classic example of how, on the basis of shallow research and a few unreliable source documents, history can be distorted and reputations of individuals unjustly defamed on the one hand and undeservedly exalted on the other hand.

It is unfortunate that the article was published.

Colonel George A. McGee, Jr., USA Ret.  
New Braunfels, Texas

#### **The Author Replies:**

I am surprised but pleased that my article about Colonel Charles N. Hunter and Galahad has stirred up a small storm of interest, because I think that the history of the 5307th continues to be profitable as a case study of leadership and the use of light forces. I am grateful for General Wedemeyer's praise and for his kind tribute to Colonel Hunter. On the other hand, the article seems to have gotten under the skins of Mr. Sunderland and Colonel McGee, neither of whom, it seems, could write a word of praise for Hunter in the course of their long letters. Before responding, however, I would mention that I have received several private communications from former Galahads and persons otherwise connected to the unit. All of these correspondents wrote to express their agreement with my assessment of Colonel Hunter.

Mr. Sunderland believes that I have unfairly disparaged General Stilwell. I did not intend for the article to be a diatribe against Stilwell, but it is impossible to appreciate the problems experienced by Galahad or the quality of Hunter's

leadership without understanding how the decisions of Stilwell and his staff adversely affected the unit.

I have great respect for the official history of the Burma campaign, *Stilwell's Command Problems*, by Romanus and Sunderland. This volume is meticulously researched and documented, and it generally shows a fine objectivity. However, like many official histories, it too often tries to put the best possible face on unfortunate situations, and it sometimes refrains from judgment where judgment is due. In my opinion, the volume is far too kind to Stilwell. It is true that Stilwell accomplished a great deal. As Shelford Bidwell has written, he deserves the lion's share of credit for the successes of the Burma Campaign of 1944. Still, another man of more even temperament and stability might have accomplished more at less cost.

Unfortunately, Stilwell's staff was inept. Even if one reads only *Stilwell's Command Problems*, this conclusion is obvious to the perceptive reader. But when one reads the many other British and American accounts of the campaign, the conclusion is inescapable. Stilwell himself showed an aversion to clear lines of command and a contempt for formal staff work, and he was inexplicably secretive about his intentions. For example, Brigadier General Haydon Boatner, Stilwell's Chief of Staff, told Hunter in later years that Stilwell never discussed his plans for the capture of the town of Myitkyina with him. No doubt, Stilwell's staff was infected by the old man's attitude. Here are some specific examples of the staff's bungling.

- As Galahad moved out on its first operation to Walawbum on the basis of Stilwell's verbal order, neither Hunter nor Merrill was aware that an OSS-supervised force of Kachin tribesmen was in the immediate area. These Kachins had accurately located the enemy dispositions; they could have guided Galahad directly to the Japanese rear. However, neither Stilwell nor his staff passed this information to Merrill. The same situation occurred again on the move to Shaduzup and Inkangahtawng. Lieutenant Colonel Osborne never found out that the Kachins were in the area and available to support him. Hunter, fortunately, stumbled across a Kachin force and used them thereafter as guides. This kind of information should routinely appear in written operations orders and in operational briefings.

- The NCAC did not provide air photographs of the objective area for either of the first two operations. Hunter has written that he routinely received air photos *after* he had already passed through the area photographed.

- During the Walawbum operation, Merrill lost radio communications with Stilwell's headquarters for more than 24 hours. No effort was made by Stilwell's staff to restore communications. It was during this period that Merrill prematurely pulled the 2nd and 3rd Battalions out of their blocking positions. Stilwell, in fact, issued an order calling for a coordinated assault against the encircled Japanese by his Chinese and American forces *after* Merrill had already withdrawn Galahad. The NCAC staff could easily have restored communications to Merrill through liaison flights or message drops, but they failed to do so. As a result, they failed to keep their commander informed about the dispositions and intentions of Merrill.

- The staff routinely failed to keep itself informed about tactical conditions through personal visits to the areas of operation. When Osborne's task force moved to Shaduzup, its advance was continuously slowed up by brushes with Japanese detachments, for the most part because Stilwell had assigned them an excessively shallow path of envelopment. During the course of this tension-filled advance into the enemy rear, Osborne received a message from NCAC asking when he intended to finish his "scenic tour of the countryside." Likewise, from May to July, the staff repeatedly called on various Chindit forces to increase the pace of their advances, apparently not realizing that the approaches to their objectives were inundated by monsoon floods, sometimes at a chest-level depth and greater.

- During the siege of Nphum Ga, the NCAC staff promised to send a battalion of Chinese to help break the Japanese stranglehold. The battalion never arrived and no member of the staff followed up on this action to insure that the order was carried out.

- The NCAC and Myitkyina Task Force Headquarters continuously underestimated the size of the Japanese forces at Myitkyina, asserting that there were only about 700 defenders when the actual number was three to five times that number.

Stilwell was far too slow to recognize the deterioration of Galahad as a fighting force. After the terrible battle of Nphum Ga, Stilwell wrote in his diary that "Galahad is OK. Hard fight at Nphum Ga. Cleaned out the Japs and hooked up. No worry there." In fact, as Mr. Sunderland himself notes, Galahad had suffered at Nphum Ga far more than anyone at NCAC realized. Stilwell again was slow to realize that Galahad was finished by the time it arrived at Myitkyina. On 20 May 1944, Stilwell wrote in his diary that Galahad was "to finish the job at Myitkyina," i.e., to take the town, a task completely beyond its capability. Interestingly, Stilwell made these notations in his diary during the same time frame that Galahad elements were being pushed out of their positions at Myitkyina by Japanese counterattacks and individual soldiers were being evacuated in large numbers. It was not until 30 May that Stilwell noted in his diary that Galahad was "shot." Hunter notes that Stilwell, in judging the condition of Galahad as a unit, relied on reports of staff officers and commanders who had not even visited the front lines.

Mr. Sunderland objects to my characterization of Stilwell as a man without compassion. He quotes a passage in Stilwell's diary as evidence of Stilwell's feelings for his soldiers. I suggest that it is more important to look at Stilwell's *actions*, rather than his *words*, to judge the nature of his compassion.

I noted in the original article how Stilwell ordered the collection of still unrecovered Galahad soldiers convalescing in the rear for return to combat duty at Myitkyina. Charlton Ogburn notes in his *Marauders* how the medical officers in the rear raced after one convoy of such troops and forced them to return to the convalescent camps. The medical history of this campaign, *Crisis Fleeting* by James H. Stone, describes how Stilwell's commanders, apparently with his knowledge, "instituted Draconian measures" to return the wounded and ill to combat. In Mr. Sunderland's own words, medical officers received "extremely heavy moral pressure, just short of outright orders, . . . to return to duty or keep

in the line every American who could pull a trigger." When such men arrived at Myitkyina, Hunter refused to use many of them in the forward areas, keeping them near the airfield instead, to provide security.

I also note in the original article how Stilwell ordered the commitment of untrained American engineers and completely unorganized replacement units into combat at Myitkyina. Again, Mr. Sunderland notes how the engineers "had not seen a rifle since their basic training days and had simply been taken from their bulldozers and power generators to fight as infantry combat teams." According to Stone, "the engineers were absolutely unprepared for combat." Ian Fellowes-Gordon calls them the "greenest of the green" and describes how they were mercilessly cut up by the Japanese.

The replacement units were no better prepared for combat than the engineers. The evidence is clear that they had had no opportunity to train as units or even to get to know one another before being sent into the attack. These men averaged only *one week* in country before being sent to Myitkyina. In some cases, they did not even receive their weapons until they arrived at Myitkyina. Receiving one 450-man replacement unit, Hunter rejected half of them after short interviews because for the most part they had no combat training at all and had not fired a weapon in over a year. Hunter went on to say that it would be smarter to shoot them as they got off the airplane because it would save the trouble of having to drag or carry them back from the combat zone under enemy fire.

The final issue contested by Mr. Sunderland which I will address is whether or not Stilwell mishandled the Battle of Myitkyina. Stilwell's decision to send Galahad plus two Chinese regiments to capture the Myitkyina airfield was bold and decisive. Had it led immediately to the capture of the town, the Myitkyina operation would today be hailed as a great operational-level victory. However, Stilwell (and Merrill) failed to realize that taking the airfield was only the *first step* to a complete victory. Complete victory required the town's rapid capture as well, before surprise was lost. Capture of the town required a detailed tactical plan based on solid intelligence, plus the provision of proper supplies, reinforcements, and combat support, particularly in the form of artillery. However, there is no evidence that either Stilwell or Merrill had made any such plans to move against the city. Hunter, of course, inquired diligently from Merrill what he was to do after the airfield fell. Merrill's only reply was that he would fly in to take command. Hunter never received an order from either Merrill or Stilwell to attack the town during the first critical days of the operation.

I have already described in the original article how Hunter's arrangements with Merrill to have food (three days of supply) and ammunition (five days of supply) were interrupted by the arrival of aviation engineers, anti-aircraft troops, liaison planes, and a battalion of Chinese troops *without its commander or staff and not under Hunter's command*. Sunderland wrongly excuses Stratemeyer's interference in this affair as the exercise of his "prerogative." It was no such thing. Any maneuver commander will tell you that a supporting commander does not have the authority to upset tactical plans without first coordinating with and

obtaining the approval of the maneuver commander. As a result of the uncontrolled airflow, Hunter's essential ammunition and food arrived three days late.

Merrill also did not fly in to take command as promised. Left to his own initiative, Hunter ordered the Chinese 150th Regiment to attack the town, as Mr. Sunderland has described. However, with only 800 rifles, a few machine guns, poor leadership, and two 75mm howitzers in support, the regiment failed on three tries from 17 to 20 May to carry the town. This weak unit, however, was the only one available to Hunter for the assault. Even though other infantry units flew into Myitkyina in the first three days, they were not under Hunter's command.

Stilwell flew in on the 18th but gave no guidance to Hunter on what to do. Inexplicably, Stilwell waited until 22 May to appoint a Myitkyina Task Force Commander. Only a TF commander had the authority to command all the available forces in the area, yet Stilwell waited five days to appoint one (and he then overlooked Hunter, the best man for the job). By that time, surprise had been lost completely and the Japanese had begun to reinforce the garrison. A quick victory thus slipped from Stilwell's grasp because of his failure to plan ahead and anticipate the obvious requirements for a complete victory. Instead, the defenders held out for two and a half months.

After his initial failure at Myitkyina, Stilwell's best option would have been to ask for the British 36th Division. Even though, as Mr. Sunderland notes, this excellent division was not immediately available to Stilwell, it could have been available within a month if Stilwell had pressed for it with his usual singlemindedness. If called for, the 36th Division could certainly have done a far better job against the Japanese than the dilatory, unaggressive Chinese. The 36th did, in fact, fly into the Myitkyina airfield in July, but it was sent south under British command, rather than against Myitkyina, which was still held by the Japanese. But Stilwell never asked for it. He elected to keep it a Chinese-American effort, not wanting to share any credit with the British. This odious justification, based on simple misplaced pride, led Stilwell to send in the Galahad evacuees, untrained American engineers, and unprepared American replacement units, as described above, rather than a well-trained, coherent, battle-experienced British division. Stilwell's willingness to sacrifice American lives rather than ask for more capable help from the British says a lot about his character.

Turning now to Colonel McGee's comments, I admit to some mystification because his remarks disagree so fundamentally with the many printed accounts written by participants in the Burma campaign. Colonel McGee derides the books written by Hunter and Charlton Ogburn and asks us to accept his own version. Colonel McGee's assertion that I have relied on only a few flawed sources is wrong; I have referred in detail to over 25 different books.

I stand 100 percent behind what I wrote in the article regarding the attitudes of Galahad and the Chindits toward a 90-day limit to their operations. There is no doubt at all about the fact that Wingate informed all of his brigades, including the Americans, that they would be withdrawn after 90 days. Merrill made a similar promise before Galahad moved out to Myitkyina. SEAC Headquarters itself endorsed the limit and sought to convince Stilwell to honor it.

If Colonel McGee feels that 90 days was nothing more than a planning figure, he is surely alone among Galahad veterans in this regard.

Colonel McGee states that Stilwell was sitting in a jeep by the road observing Galahad quietly as the men marched into their assembly area near Shingbwiyang. No other historical record notes this event although several note Stilwell's conspicuous absence, as I did. I feel confident that Colonel McGee is confusing Stilwell with Hunter and Merrill, who were indeed sitting beside the road in a jeep.

Colonel McGee states that Stilwell told Merrill after the Walawbum operation, "Never again let one of the battalions get in a position where it is going to be mauled and cut up." This may be so, but it contrasts drastically with the order of Stilwell's staff to Merrill to hold at Nphum Ga, where Colonel McGee's own battalion was, in fact, severely mauled, losing almost half its strength. It also contrasts with the well-documented fact that Stilwell was dissatisfied with Merrill for pulling his battalions out of their blocks at Walawbum too soon, before his Chinese regiments had fully advanced to take over their positions.

Colonel McGee uncharitably denigrates Hunter's role during the Walawbum operation. As the Deputy Commander, Hunter properly supervised air resupply of the force. However, he also visited the 3rd Battalion in its blocking position and inspected their dispositions; he personally led a patrol to find the tank unit which was moving up to support the 5307th; and he closely monitored ammunition resupply to insure that the battalions did not run out.

Colonel McGee is simply wrong in his insistence that Hunter's role in the planning of the next operation was as a liaison officer to NCAC. The plan was clearly a joint effort between Hunter and Merrill, and Hunter may well have been its primary author. He carried the plan to NCAC, there discussing it and arguing for its approval. He was not simply a messenger boy as Colonel McGee alleges.

Colonel McGee also describes Hunter as ineffective as the commander of the Inkangahtawng task force and says that Hunter issued no orders for the operation. Hunter's account, on the other hand, shows that he issued orders every day. He temporarily established his headquarters at Sharaw Ga in order to supervise the evacuation of some sick soldiers while the maneuver elements moved forward. Initially, he had communications with the blocking elements (McGee's battalion plus another column) and with Merrill, but lost communications the next day. Hunter fully intended to join the blocking elements in their forward positions and was in fact flying over the positions preliminary to doing so when he noticed that McGee had already pulled out on the orders of Merrill. Despite his dissatisfaction with this change to the situation, precipitated above all by Stilwell's staff, Hunter reacted immediately and capably to coordinate the withdrawal.

I suspect that there may be some resentment on the part of Colonel McGee regarding the portrayal in Hunter's book of the activities of the 2nd Battalion during the withdrawal. Hunter criticizes McGee for losing control of his battalion during its movement, of not policing up the rear of his column, and

of moving with excess urgency. These criticisms are echoed by Bidwell and Sunderland.

Colonel McGee also denigrates Hunter's role during the siege of Nphum Ga. Certainly, the 2nd Battalion, under Colonel McGee's able and brave leadership, bore the brunt of the fighting. The battalion's resistance and ultimate victory in the face of such heavy Japanese pressure were nothing short of heroic. Seldom have soldiers fought so valiantly and desperately. To say that Hunter won is not to take anything away from these men. It simply acknowledges Hunter's forceful and effective leadership as the field commander of the forces in contact and the architect of the efforts by the 1st and 3rd battalions to relieve the 2nd battalion.

Regarding Hunter's letter to Stilwell, Colonel McGee seems overly concerned that Hunter was adding to Stilwell's problems or was likely to offend him by his remarks about Chinese troops. Hunter was simply doing his best under very difficult conditions to stand up for his command by alerting his boss to the current status and previous mishandling of the 5307th. The letter, in my opinion, should have been written by Merrill, but Merrill was too much under Stilwell's spell; he never seemed to have it within himself to disagree with the old man. Colonel McGee may think that issues like the withholding of decorations and promotions or the absence of a proper regimental designation and flag are trivial. The men of Galahad felt otherwise. Suffice it to say that Hunter's letter formed part of the basis for an official investigation into the circumstances of Galahad's breakdown, and it was found to be sound in its allegations.

Major Scott R. McMichael, USA  
Marina, Calif.

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*Owing to the great length of the communications received for this quarter's "Commentary & Reply" feature, it has been necessary to abridge them extensively and to delete their documentation. The unabridged originals are available for reference in the Archives Branch, US Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.*

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## Book Reviews

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**The Straw Giant.** By Arthur T. Hadley. 314 pages. Random House, New York, 1986. \$18.95. *Reviewed by General Richard G. Stilwell, USA Ret.*

In recent months we've seen review after favorable review of Arthur Hadley's assessment of our armed forces from World War II forward. Even Harry Summers, former stalwart strategist-in-residence at the Army War College, has given the book a "thumbs up." Retired Lieutenant General James M. Gavin, outstanding World War II combat commander and close associate of Hadley, says, "An extraordinary combination of experience, insight, research, and reporting. I know of no other journalist who could have produced this important book." Really?

My extensive notes on the pages of *The Straw Giant* buttress an entirely different conclusion. It is short on insight and research; long on arrogance; replete with distortions, inaccuracies, and facts mixed with fantasy. It bears scant resemblance to the armed forces in which I served for the same forty years. In a word, *The Straw Giant* does not merit the serious attention of the military professional, let alone a place in his library. A harsh judgment, to be sure, and perhaps slightly skewed in reaction to Hadley's blanket denigration of the senior officer corps—past and present—of the US armed forces. Consider for example this Hadleyan jewel: "Generals and admirals are the most undisciplined of men. They have succeeded ever since their junior years by bending orders." What careerist would not bridle at this sweeping, undocumented, patently spurious assertion so foreign to his experience, so at odds with the military ethic that is the bedrock of soldiering?

*The Straw Giant* opens with a stirring account (there are better ones in print) of the ill-fated Iranian rescue mission. Hadley has some facts right and some wrong, a characteristic of his entire volume. His interviews with individuals who were on the ground at Desert One gave him the view from the bottom. However, his failure to talk to those higher in the chain of command—or to Admiral Holloway and other members of the board which made the painstaking analysis of that disastrous outcome—left him substantially misinformed on a number of critical points. For example, he castigates the choice of Marine pilots for an extended and difficult overland mission as a mindless decision taken solely to ensure the Marines a piece of the action. To the contrary, the selection criterion was "best qualified in HH-53 operations," irrespective of service or location. All but three pilots selected turned out to be Marines.

In any case, Hadley perceives in that failed operation all the major ills which afflict the military establishment as a whole, and distills them from six which provide the thread of continuity for his so-called "Report from the Field." The first is the alleged isolation of the military from the mainstream of American society (in his words, the "Great Divorce"). He stresses the limited social and economic cross-section of population from which the volunteer Army is recruited and, in lesser degree, the disproportionately small number of graduates of the most prestigious

universities (particularly the Ivy League) on the officer rolls. As the author sees it, this widening gulf means that the oncoming national leadership, in and out of government, will have scant appreciation for the military instrument, lacking personal experience or insights gleaned from the service experience of sons and daughters. The second—Hadley's attention thereto suggests he ranks it as the most severe—is rivalry among and within the services. Time and again, the services are portrayed as the bad guys who flout the directives of higher authority and subordinate national to individual service interests. Third is the "impotence" of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the lack of adequate authority and structure for the exercise of command and control of joint forces. Hadley provides his own lengthy version of the negotiating history of the National Security Act and its subsequent revisions. Fourth is the penchant of the National Command Authority for over-control of the operational forces. Hadley hones in on McNamara's micro-management of the air campaign against North Vietnam (good example) and the White House's minute involvement in crises of minor military significance but with enormous political implications (not so good). The fifth has to do with readiness to go to war. Hadley only partially comprehends the components of readiness; and, in the end, he walks away from the entire subject. The sixth and final ill is a derivative of the second, and again the services are at the whipping post. Hadley would not agree that the Army programming and budget process is intended to produce the most effective force for the balanced discharge of all Army functions, missions, and tasks. His contention is that the Army—as well as the other services—gives primacy in allocation of funds and talent to the more glamorous (combat?) units and assignments and shortchanges Army support activities as well as joint projects and joint billets. ("Such areas . . . become pastures for the marginally competent.")

The book proper is more a memoir of Hadley's periodic visits to military units over several decades than a scholarly development of his themes. Anecdotes pepper the text, and it is quite appropriate that they cast him as the informed, perceptive, innovative reporter (after all, it's his book!). The use to which he puts these anecdotes is something else. At various times and places in the field, equipment becomes non-operational; intelligence is ignored; communication breaks occur; dumb orders are issued; newly assigned crews are not conversant with mission and environment; personnel voice disenchantment with this and that. But the US military establishment is a mammoth organization; and to let the reader draw the inference that a particular fault in a single unit is indicative of the overall state of the armed forces is mischievous. The \$400 hammer is a case in point. That hammer included, the cost of all hammers procured by DOD in 1985 averaged \$6.81.

Equally troubling is Hadley's cavalier attitude toward accuracy in what he writes. A reporter can be forgiven for sermonizing (Hadley is addicted to that) but not for gross errors of fact. As an illustration, the half chapter on the Korean conflict (about which I have some knowledge) is laced with errors. To cite a few: The 34th Infantry Regiment did *not* break and abandon its equipment on the Pusan Perimeter. Veterans of that famous outfit will recoil in horror that their unit's reputation is so falsely impugned. The 29th Infantry Regiment did *not* break and run. It has never set foot on Korean soil! (Could Hadley have been thinking about a battalion of the 24th Infantry?) General James A. Van Fleet did *not* recommend that the US government support a military coup to overthrow President Syngman

Rhee; not only does Van Fleet categorically refute the allegation but he avers that had he wind of any such plot against constituted authority, his action would have been quite the reverse. As I know at first hand, the CIA did *not* have 3000 secret agents in North Korea during the conflict or at any time since. (A "handful" would be more correct; the author may be confused with periodic guerrilla forays, launched and supported from offshore islands.) F-84s were employed for close air support because they were better equipped for that role, *not* as a result of Air Force reluctance to assign never F-86 air-to-air interceptors; nor was lack of air-ground communications a perennial problem. The Army did *not* hold up Colonel (later General) Charles H. Bonesteel's promotion for siding with the Air Force in a joint staff action while George C. Marshall was Secretary of Defense. (Bonesteel, newly promoted to Colonel, was in London on high-level international duties throughout Marshall's tenure.)

The foregoing list hardly squares with the description of *The Straw Giant* as a book embodying, among other things, "extraordinary research." The Korea section may be atypical—it would take considerable checking to so determine. However, I can attest to an abundance of other errors—of fact, interpretation, and judgment—elsewhere in the text. It is conceivable that Hadley has unusual difficulty reading his notes and getting things in proper time sequence. He must be referring to someone else's army when he alleges that "until 1978, soldiers were murdering their officers and destroying their equipment." Or, again, that "the quality of the troops we have available for combat is statistically disguised because the women being recruited into the Armed Services are decisively more intelligent than the men." Still again, Hadley reports, in the present tense, "We have none," referring to the total absence of radio direction-finding, intercept, and jamming capability at division level. (Has he never heard of a CEWI battalion?) In ridiculing the DRAGON anti-tank missile as anything but a "wonder weapon" (his phrase, not the Army's), he demonstrates scant understanding of its function within the array of battalion combat firepower, its tactical employment, the what and why of the launch-effects-trainer, and the selection basis for DRAGON gunners. My marginalia document similar gaffes with respect to the political imperatives of NATO strategy, nuclear targeting concepts, the joint planning system, the almost total dedication of TACAIR to conventional warfare, and on and on.

The point of all this is simply to underscore the responsibility of author, editor, and publisher to readership. The American public has every right to expect that the combination of a journalist with sound credentials, with reasonable knowledge of the subject under discussion, and under contract to a reputable publishing house will produce a text that is verified as to fact, whatever the accompanying conclusions. *The Straw Giant* does not meet this elementary criterion.

Given the barrage upon barrage of criticism—and not infrequent insult—leveled at the uniformed military, and the all-pervading weaknesses he alleges, the Hadley formulae for setting the Giant right should logically be revolutionary in nature and extensive in scope. They are not. The first exhorts the American elite to recognize the armed forces as a key and enduring national institution, not an "unwanted stepchild." Are we indeed held in such low repute by the mainstream of America? His second—and principal—thesis is the essentiality of a fair and just draft: "What makes us think that in the more complex and deadly world of today

we can get by with inferior troops?" Few would agree with this "expert" evaluation of the quality of today's soldier. I submit that Hadley has reached a supportable conclusion for the wrong reason: the *nation* needs the draft, not the Army. To complete the short list of remedies, Hadley argues for adoption of General David Jones's recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of the JCS Chairman and measures to enhance the authority of the unified and specified commanders. Nothing new here. More far-reaching reforms, embodied in the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 and approved by overwhelming majority of both Houses of Congress, are now the law of the land.

I am left with an unanswered question: On what basis did numerous reviewers commend this book?

**Eisenhower at War, 1943-1945.** By David Eisenhower. 1004 pages. Random House, New York, 1986. \$29.95. *Reviewed by Brigadier General Douglas Kinnard, USA Ret.*

David Eisenhower's massive volume on his grandfather's role as Supreme Allied Commander in Europe during the Second World War is the first of a trilogy concerning the career of Dwight David Eisenhower, with the next two volumes to deal with Ike's White House years. An obvious question comes to mind: given the personal relationship between author and subject, is this an objective account? The answer is, yes.

The central theme of the work concerns problems associated with coalition warfare. The author's thesis is that the problems the Supreme Commander faced were exceptional and he met them in ways not previously understood. Hence the criticisms of his leadership style, in particular his lack of firmness, are misplaced since his task was far more political than has been previously realized. In keeping with this approach the book is in reality a political history of the greatest military campaign ever fought by the United States placed in the context of the military operations. It is meticulously researched and makes a fascinating narrative.

The book begins in late November 1943 at the Teheran Conference, where the final decisions were made on the cross-channel invasion for the following spring (Overlord). Stalin pointedly suggested that to give the decision credibility, Roosevelt should name a Supreme Commander for the invasion. The only candidates were George Marshall and Eisenhower, and since FDR wanted to keep Marshall in Washington he selected Eisenhower.

Conceptually the author divides his work into three phases, each posing problems of coalition warfare of a different sort. The first phase covers Ike's efforts to consolidate his new command and prepare for Overlord: the landings on D-Day, 6 June 1944—surely the most complex and masterful military operation ever conducted; the battle of Normandy; and the breakout beginning on 1 August. It was during this period that the first major American-British divergency surfaced; this was over Churchill's attempt to thwart the ten-division Allied landing in Southern France (Anvil) scheduled for 15 August. The author treats the matter in detail, but to sum up a complex issue, the conflict was over allocation of forces between the French and Italian fronts. In one of Churchill's fantasies (remember Gallipoli?), there was an opportunity for a British-controlled thrust through Trieste toward

Vienna if the forces programmed for southern France were diverted to Italy. Fortunately for all concerned, they were not.

In the second phase the author treats the great race across France in August 1944, the fall campaign, and the German Ardennes counteroffensive in December 1944. Against this backdrop David Eisenhower focuses on British-American divergencies, now no longer muted as they were over Anvil. The British point man was the egomaniacal Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery. The principal strategic issue was the broad-front strategy desired by the Americans versus the narrow-front thrust across northern Germany favored by the British. In the end, as David tells the story, Ike called Monty's bluff and approved Market Garden, the airborne operation to seize Arnhem in September 1944 and open the gates to the narrow thrust to Berlin. It was "a bridge too far," resulting in 10,000 casualties, the destruction of the British First Airborne Division, and proof that the Germans were far from beaten or vulnerable to a thrust across their northern flank. The subsequent Ardennes offensive is described vividly, in particular the decision by Ike to give Montgomery command of American forces on the northern flank of the Bulge—much to the consternation of Omar Bradley, who considered Monty's egotism as "megalomania."

In the final phase of the war, the winter-spring offensive of 1945, the author's emphasis shifts to the Soviet issue, in particular the question of who would capture Berlin and Prague. As the author sees it, Ike felt the decision to divide Germany into occupation zones, which had been confirmed at the February Yalta Conference, made the capture of Berlin irrelevant considering the estimate of the price in casualties. Prague is another story. No question the Americans could have taken it at minimum loss of life—but what difference would it have made in the long run? The communist takeover of Czechoslovakia did not take place until 1948, long after American and Soviet forces had left that country. Would the American capture of Prague have changed that?

Turning now to Eisenhower's experience in coalition warfare, we must first make the point that his authority was at best tenuous. He did take his orders from the Combined (American and British) Chiefs of Staff, but he had far more authority as an American commander than as an Allied commander. In such a situation, personal relations were of paramount importance. In this context Ike was a superb choice for supreme commander. He was a diplomat and something of an Anglophile to boot—otherwise he could never have borne the cross of Churchill, let alone Montgomery.

It is important to note that whatever the importance of personalities, the basic issues between the British and Americans were really a clash of legitimate national interests. The British were still affected by the horrors of the Western Front in the Great War (for which they were in large part responsible) and the continued notion of empire, now long past its prime. The Americans, on the other hand, favored a direct strategic approach to the war in the Ulysses S. Grant style, and were against continuation of British colonialism without really understanding the social forces which would inevitably be let loose in the postwar world.

As to the Soviet question, Eisenhower, as his grandson portrays him, was always perceptive to the need for cooperation. He was well aware that without Soviet cooperation there never could have been a second front. Ultimately the Soviet

question forced Ike into a political role in the broadest context of that term. Decisions about capturing Berlin and Prague were necessary, and in the vacuum caused by the death of FDR, he made them. This notion of Eisenhower as political strategist is a recurring theme of the book.

In sum, this is a carefully researched and well-written work on a most important subject. It evokes the jittery nature of the times, all too easy to forget at this hour. The volume's relationship to the rest of the trilogy remains to be seen, but in its own right it is a tour de force. Readers will find it compulsive reading—but don't plan on doing it in one evening. By any intellectual standard it is first-rate and places the author among the best of American political-military historians.

One final point. During the many years this reviewer was involved in questions of NATO strategy, the central question was, How does NATO go to war? After reflecting on this massive study of the problems of coalition warfare, I wonder if a more pertinent question would not be, How could NATO fight a war?

**Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-Makers.** By Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May. 329 pages. The Free Press, New York, 1986. \$19.95. *Reviewed by Dr. J. B. Holley, Jr. (Major General, USAFR Ret.)*

This book is a spin-off from the course the authors teach in the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. Educated men have traditionally held that study of the past offers useful insights to decisionmakers in all walks of life, but particularly to those in government. The central thesis of this work is that by following a few simple procedures developed by the authors in their course, those insights can be significantly enhanced. In short, they propose using history in a more disciplined way, avoiding the too-easy trap of false analogies and other self-delusions stemming from shallow perceptions of experience. While the suggested devices for making more effective use of history are easy to identify, they do demand a good deal of sophistication in application. The authors' expectations are modest: they see real benefit in improvement at the margins, "a little sharper sense of purpose here, a little clearer sense of danger there."

The book is built around a series of case histories, successes and failures in governmental decisionmaking, among them the Cuban missile crisis, the decision to defend Korea, the *Mayaguez* rescue, and comparable crises in the civil sphere such as the swine flu scare or the decision to launch Social Security. Each crisis is used as a foil to expound a further step in the methods developed by the authors. In barest outline these methods involve the following: To define the problem confronting the decisionmaker, they suggest a listing of what is known, what is unclear, and what is presumed for the situation in hand and for all seemingly analogous situations in the past. Then, they would have us decide how these situations are like the present and how they are different. Next they offer what they call "the Goldberg Rule": instead of looking narrowly at the crisis, the immediate problem, try to see the story as a whole with its historical antecedents. This will sometimes reveal that the immediate crisis is not the real problem. As a means to this end, they suggest devising a "time line," a listing of critical events, thus providing the context in which the issue

evolved. For further help in articulating the history of the issue they suggest applying the standard journalist's questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how? Next, the authors urge the decisionmaker to ask of his advisors what odds they would give a stated presumption, how much of their own fortunes they would wager on the accuracy of their advice. Another device, labeled "Alexander's Question," is to ask what facts if at hand would cause one to change a proposed decision. A final procedure, called "Placement," suggests the systematic search for revealing clues by placing key individuals or organizations on a time line to identify by inference their probable outlook at that moment to the situation at hand.

Does the method work? Most of the authors' students who have applied it in their subsequent careers, in government, in law, in business, and in the military, seem to think so. Certainly it is worth trying, and the Kennedy School will sell copies of the case histories at cost to all who wish to undertake a trial. Some caveats are in order: all who have had to make decisions in a crisis know how easy it is for critics to appear wise after the event. The courts have long recognized this danger and decline to rule prospectively on new statutes, insisting on waiting until litigation brings forth a body of experience. At some points one gets the feeling that the authors' comments on the case histories are tinged with an after-the-fact perspective. But these seeming lapses are slight; on balance the method deserves not merely a reading but a studied and rigorous application, since even slight gains at the margin in decisionmaking are worth sustained effort. Decisionmakers are not the only ones who can profit from this book: members of the military intelligence community beset with the difficult art of assessment should find the methods offered here a powerful new tool.

*War Annual 1.* By John Laffin. 187 pages. Brassey's Defence Publishers, London. 1986. \$13.50. *Reviewed by Colonel Rod Paschall, USA.*

Interesting, but short of the mark on the first try. The idea is to put out a paperback each year that provides thumbnail sketches of each ongoing military conflict in the world. The author would explain the background of the dispute, sum up the opposing force structures, cite the major events of the year that influenced the war, give you a map, and offer a little observation on the probable outcome. At the end of the book, the author could include some trends on the nature of armed conflicts and militarily significant changes. Not a bad concept. Laffin has done all of this for the year 1985.

My first argument with the *War Annual* is that there are no sources cited. For one who teaches, it is important to judge a book by checking the basis for judgments. For one who wishes to explore a conflict further, it is vital to have the author's help in the selection of material. Presumably, the author has gone through the painful selection process once and has something useful to say about what is good and what should be avoided. Laffin does not believe in such mundane techniques. In his introduction, he airily announces, "My sources are many and varied." He goes on modestly to state that he has built up "hundreds of contacts in many countries." One has the impression of a London-based, Captain Nemo-like character surrounded by huge banks of computers and chattering telex machines

carrying on a phone conversation with one of the prime figures in the Burkina Faso-Mali fracas, breathlessly reporting in to Brassey Central from the war-ravaged jungles of Africa.

My second barb has to do with the author's lofty proclamation that he has made no attempt to take sides. After climbing to the summit of impartiality, Laffin then decides to include the US operation in Grenada in his 32 accounts of armed conflict in 1985. Yes, he knows that the action did not take place in 1985. He informs us that his report "sets the record straight." After a summary of newspaper articles about the incident, Laffin concludes by quoting an obscure British journalist who pronounces the American effort to have been illegal, unnecessary, and injurious to the entire region's economic and democratic development. If that is neutrality, I'm a B-52 bomber pilot.

My final salvo is aimed at one of the author's "war trends" pieces. It has to do with an apparent armed confrontation between the United States and a forthcoming Japanese military juggernaut bent on conquest of the Pacific followed by what one must presume is a secret Tokyo design for global dominance. Before the reader clamps on his headset to listen for "Tora, Tora, Tora," it may be wise to consider that the current military debate in Japan is based on a generally accepted acknowledgement that Tokyo cannot defend its home islands, is three years behind in its procurement, and has failed again to spend one percent of its GNP on defense.

Why then is *War Annual* worth considering? First and foremost, there is nothing like it. It gives the promise of being an excellent research tool and companion volume to the International Institute for Strategic Studies' yearly *Military Balance*. It has the right proportion. For example, Laffin has devoted eighteen pages to the Iran-Iraq War and three pages to the India-Kashmir border dispute. *War Annual* provides a quick update on current confrontations and will serve the researcher well in the future by giving him a source to trace the yearly progress of armed disputes. The maps are good, giving an immediate orientation for strategic implications. Finally, *War Annual* serves as a reminder as to the actual extent of use of force on the globe. Despite all of the ink spilt over SDI, NATO, and nuclear issues, the real business of war is centered on insurgencies, civil wars, and low-intensity conflict. I would not buy *War Annual 1*. But, if Laffin can achieve some degree of neutrality, and if he begins to cite his sources, *War Annual 2* may be a good purchase.

**The Soviet Paradox: External Expansion, Internal Decline.** By Seweryn Bialer. 391 pages. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1986. \$22.95. Reviewed by Colonel H. H. McCloy, Jr., USMC.

With the considerable psychological, political, and historical insights at his command, Sovietologist Seweryn Bialer has crafted a detailed analysis of the Soviet Union, a threatening and yet threatened giant. A multinational conglomerate, the USSR today is at the peak of its military powers and territorial expansion, yet paradoxically is in a state of economic, social, and political decay which it seems unable to reverse. It is not the lack of intelligent leadership that plagues the Soviets, argues Bialer. Rather, it is the rigid ideological underpinnings of the regime which render its societal systems and institutions vulnerable.

In its competition with the United States, Bialer sees the USSR as a nation that fears the strong, exploits the weak, and is averse to international risk-taking. He predicts that the future of US-USSR relations will revolve around Soviet attempts to tarnish the US image abroad and drive wedges between the United States and its Atlantic Alliance partners. Another item high on the Soviet list of foreign policy objectives is curtailing the arms race. This is necessary more to be able to redirect resources from military to domestic interests than to improve relations with the United States. Bialer's analysis of US-Soviet arms control prospects displays rare prescience: "In arms control negotiations . . . Gorbachev appears willing to make major concessions concerning strategic offensive weapons, verification methods that would include some on-site inspections, and acceptance of research on Star Wars systems if tied to a moratorium on testing and development. His position seems to indicate a belief, however, that this will not be enough to satisfy Ronald Reagan." These statements could have been written immediately following the Reykjavik conference instead of months before.

Bialer details the problems of the Soviet system and possible remedies along with the political and ideological baggage which the Soviets bring to their decisionmaking process. He also offers recommendations for the United States in managing its Soviet relations.

There are two particular reasons why US strategists should understand not only the Soviet problems but also the remedies which Bialer believes that Moscow must employ. One, should we see Moscow undertake some of these remedies, it may be a significant indicator of shifts in Soviet policy. And two, by identifying the potential Soviet solutions as well as the problems, strategists may be better able to exploit these Soviet vulnerabilities by impeding the remedial actions themselves. Restricting the export of agricultural technology to the East might be one example.

This book thus provides information for those who would understand better and perhaps influence the path of the US-Soviet rivalry. As a politico-psychological tour de force, it is a worthy and far more detailed complement to such sweeping treatments of the superpower competition as Zbigniew Brzezinski's *Game Plan*.

**How NATO Weakens the West.** By Melvyn Krauss. 271 pages. Simon and Schuster, New York, 1986. \$18.95. Reviewed by Colonel Henry G. Gale, USA.

It is always a pleasure to read a bold book characterized by sound analysis and intelligent prescription. Unfortunately, Mr. Krauss has written a book that is merely bold. NATO-bashing is in the air, and our author joins with glee. His thesis: the United States must knock some sense into European NATO by leaving Europe to its own devices. Europe is rich and blessed with a skilled work force, but its inclination to sponsor welfarism dilutes security while Uncle Sam provides a free defense ride. Denied that free ride provided by the American taxpayer, Europe will hitch up its trousers, roll up its sleeves, arm Germany with nukes, thumb its nose at the Soviet Union, and get on with its own defense. There is nothing like being left in the lurch by a superpower ally to stiffen resolve and get the adrenaline flowing. Western Europe will acquire the political will necessary to stand up to the Evil Empire by watching US forces sail back to America. Europe will cancel welfare-state

programs that coddle its citizens, and build up the military forces necessary to show the Soviet Union that the days of Western-subsidized pipelines, East-West trade, detente, technology transfer, and limp-wristed European pacifism are things of the past. No more Mr. Nice Guy! Europe will serve notice that Rambo is really a European.

If Europe doesn't draw the line and stand firm, to hell with it! The United States has other fish to fry and cannot be inhibited by European nay-saying. Further, the same applies to Japan (granted NATO status by Mr. Krauss). Shape up, Europe and Japan; Uncle Sam is shipping out!

Presumably the Soviet Union will be driven to despair at the prospect of American forces leaving Europe and Japan: because US presence in Western Europe legitimizes Soviet military presence in the East; because Europe and the United States will stop arguing once Uncle Sam leaves NATO; because Europe currently moderates US anti-Soviet behavior; because Europe will rearm if the United States goes away. One suspects that the Soviet Union, like Liberace, will cry all the way to the bank.

Certainly economic analysis and passion have their rightful places in human affairs, but so do reason and some consideration of probabilities as one contemplates the serious effects of a dramatic shift in long-standing US security policies as they affect US-USSR-Europe relations, US-USSR-Japan relations, and, indeed, US global strategy.

Is Mr. Krauss sure that Europe would do more for defense without the United States than with it? Is he sure that Europe would be more cohesive without American cement? Who would lead Europe: the United Kingdom, France, or Germany? Who in Europe would be happy with a bigger *Bundeswehr* or a nuclear-armed Germany? Would Norway and Denmark opt for Scandinavian neutrality if the United States left NATO? Would BENELUX accept German or French leadership? What would Canada do if we dropped out? Does Turkey expect military assistance from Denmark? Does Iceland expect help from Turkey? Without the United States would NATO disintegrate to Soviet advantage? What would be the strategic significance of Europe's loss to the United States?

It is refreshing to read lively prose from a practitioner of the dismal science, but Mr. Krauss isn't about economics, and he isn't about strategy. He has written an ideological polemic rather than an objective analysis. The object of his scorn is welfare-state Liberalism. Despite the too-cavalier tone and the essentially polemical book he has written, Mr. Krauss has a point. It is clearly to US strategic advantage to have the Europeans do more for their security so that the United States might hold more military forces in strategic reserve.

The trick, as in acquiring wealth, is not the articulation of the idea—most of us would like to be rich—but in the formulation of a plan to reach the objective. Simply announcing the departure of American troops from Europe would almost certainly do more harm than good. How to extricate US forces without destroying NATO is a topic that Mr. Krauss might address seriously if venom is to give way to the development of policy that can be implemented. If he works that one out, he might then turn to means that might be devised to retain in being US forces not deployed outside of this country. One must consider the probability that US forces taken out of Europe would not make it to Fort Benning and Fort Ord; more likely is

their eventual demobilization, thus leaving the United States with fewer forces and Europe demoralized. Mr. Krauss quotes George Kennan on the irresponsibility of the "moral isolationists":

While we are quick to allege that this or that practice in a foreign country is bad [for moral reasons] and deserves correction, seldom if ever do we seem to occupy ourselves seriously or realistically with the conceivable alternatives. It seems seldom to occur to us that even if a given situation is bad, the alternatives to it might be worse—even though history provides plenty of examples of just this phenomenon. In the eyes of many Americans it is enough for us to indicate the changes that ought, as we see it, to be made. We assume, of course, that the consequences will be benign and happy ones. But this is not always assured. . . . We are demanding, in effect, a species of veto power over those of their practices that we dislike, while denying responsibility for whatever may flow from the acceptance of our demands.

Isn't Kennan talking to Mr. Krauss? Is *How NATO Weakens the West* a responsible book?

European history suggests that there are essentially three ways to deal with bids for hegemony by the Napoleons, Hitlers, and Stalins: band together to resist the disturber of the peace; fight on alone; accommodate. This reviewer suspects that precipitous US withdrawal from NATO would encourage European accommodation to the Soviet Union.

**Soviet Ground Forces: An Operational Assessment.** By John Erickson, Lynn Hansen, and William Schneider. 276 pages. Westview Press, Boulder, Colo. 1986. \$26.00. *Reviewed by Colonel John F. Meehan, USA.*

"The offensive is the decisive form of war—the commander's ultimate means of imposing his will upon the enemy. While strategic, operational, or tactical considerations may require defending, defeat of an enemy force at any level will sooner or later require shifting to the offensive." Such emphasis on the offensive, and a resulting desire to seize and exploit the initiative, is well documented in the book under review. That the quotation is not from Soviet literature, however, but from the US Army's basic doctrinal manual, FM 100-5, highlights the value of the book. The similarities between Soviet and US doctrine, force structuring, and operating methods are highly visible and encourage the sin of "mirror imaging" of which we are all guilty. But the Soviet method of using force is different: a careful reading of this excellent book tells how.

While the claim on the dust jacket that no books on Soviet ground forces have been published for many years may not be technically true, this text is sorely needed and will fill a void in many professional libraries. It is not, however, fireside reading. With few exceptions, the authors restrict themselves to the facts; interpretive contrasts with Western doctrine and the implications of the Soviet approach are left for the reader to draw. If, after digesting the text, the reader persists

in mirror imaging it will be through no fault of the authors. They have provided a clear and complete synopsis of Soviet doctrine.

Little of what is presented is new, nor do the authors claim that it is. The value of the book lies in its utility as a reference—with materials ranging from the definition of Soviet terms at the end of the text to the excellent recapitulation of how the Soviets employ air. The chapter explaining the Soviet fascination with norms is particularly valuable, at least for this reader, and a casual phrase on page 151 highlights the Soviets' "scientific" approach to war. Consider the statement that "a certain combination of personnel and fire means and their proper use in relationship to the situation will ensure achieving the goal at the proper time." This idea might seem like a platitude were it not documented in the detailed discussion of how the Soviets feel those "certain combinations" can be mathematically calculated. These doctrinal norms (e.g. a defending division will have a frontage of 15-20 km) seem alien to a Western mind until we reflect that the West too has norms. But our "norms" are not doctrine—they are part of unit SOPs.

*Soviet Ground Forces: An Operational Assessment* is a valuable addition to any professional library. One wishes it were less of a reference text and more of an analysis, but on balance we should welcome this "single-source" overview of the Soviet way of war, particularly at the tactical level.

**Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security.** By Nadav Safran, 524 pages. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985. \$25.00. *Reviewed by Colonel L. J. Matthews, USA Ret.*

Following publication of this fine study of Saudi defense policy in late 1985, it was revealed that the author had accepted a CIA grant of \$107,430 to assist him in the research and writing of the book. This sin was immediately compounded by the announcement that he had also accepted a CIA grant of \$45,700 to assist in the sponsorship of a Harvard conference on Islam, without disclosing to participants the CIA link. A furor ensued in the academic community (a furor is a fashionable group rage; participants beat their breasts, make self-righteous noises, feel morally exhilarated, and all the while have a spanking good time). As a result, Professor Safran was censured by Harvard and stepped down from his directorship of the university's Center for Middle Eastern Studies, though thanks to tenure he retained his professorship on the Harvard faculty.

Completely apart from the unwarranted cloud on Professor Safran's scholarly integrity (he did submit the CIA book contract to Harvard authorities when he signed it in 1982), the episode was unfortunate because it distracted attention from the book itself. Further, even among those not distracted, there was the real risk that the book would henceforth be viewed, like all of Adam's children, as tainted by the procreator's original sin.

The simple truth, however, is that the work is astringently objective. A relentless ramifier and analyzer, Professor Safran deploys his explanatory points and subpoints exhaustively, letting the political and ideological chips fall where they may and achieving in the process nothing less than scholastic thoroughness. In fact, there is often a thin line separating thoroughness from redundancy, and Professor Safran, it must be said, often crosses this line. His penchant for previewing and

postviewing presented material, and the intrinsic overlap of his organizational categories, both lead to substantial repetition.

Among the principal concerns of the book are the history and development of Saudi Arabia's geostrategic position; the dynamics of its relations with its Arab and Islamic neighbors and the West; its evolving defense postures, strategies, and policies; the oil factor; and the always fascinating internal maneuverings and motivations of the Saudi royal family. Though not an express thesis developed by the author, a dominant theme that distills from the assembled material concerns American frustration over Saudi failure to cooperate more openly and fully with US peace initiatives in the Middle East and with our plans for the region's security. What American political leaders must come to realize is that it is unrealistic if not impossible for any Saudi regime to openly identify with the United States. Like it or not, we are perceived in the Islamic world as the protector and abettor of a Jewish nation that occupies Palestine, and as such we cannot be embraced by any Arab state which regards itself as vulnerable to the potently destabilizing forces of Islamic fundamentalism. The Saudi leaders know, far better than we, who can gore their camels, and thus they will continue to cast apprehensive eyes at Libya, Syria, Iran, and the PLO. It is the task of our diplomacy to recognize where Saudi and American interests coincide, and then to promote those interests on cooperative levels that the Saudis can prudently abide.

Professor Safran's study is not for the casual reader. Densely packed and sometimes heavy sledding, the book is anything but a quick, linear read. But it collects under two covers just about all that need be recorded on its subject; it provides a complete index that renders the material accessible; and it includes an exhaustive bibliography and notes that facilitate independent study. Despite Professor Safran's self-professed lack of experience in Saudi Arabia itself, his work reflects prodigious research (all from unclassified sources) and the sure hand of an expert Arabist. It will serve as an authoritative reference for students of international affairs and as an indispensable addition to the personal libraries of Middle Eastern specialists.

**American Defense Annual 1986-1987.** Edited by Joseph Kruzel. 275 pages. D. C. Heath, Lexington, Mass. 1986. \$32.00 (paper \$15.95). *Reviewed by Colonel William O. Staudenmaier, USA Ret.*

Each year profuse amounts of printer's ink are spilled to assess the state of the nation's defenses. One of the newest annual assessments is that produced by the Mershon Center—now in its second edition. It differs from most other evaluations of this type in that it focuses on the programs, budgets, and capabilities of the United States and only incidentally compares them with the Soviet Union and other nations that might pose a threat to the United States. This approach yields analyses that are more concerned with domestic affordability than with strategic effectiveness, that is, with defense input rather than output.

The book is organized to follow generally the process by which the budget is developed. First, there is a review of the global and regional situations, followed by chapters on US strategy and the defense budget. Next, a series of chapters discuss functional areas such as strategic and theater forces, seapower, personnel, the

weapons procurement process, arms control, and intelligence. Finally, a special chapter on new dimensions of national security argues that the cost—both economic and psychological—of defense is too great, that the contemporary threats are largely nonmilitary, and that it is imperative that the world economy be demilitarized.

The contributing authors are recognized experts in national security affairs; consequently their perspectives are well-known and offer no surprises. With few exceptions, they are convinced of the value of national defense, conform to the same general set of national objectives, and disagree only on the means to achieve the goals. Authors such as Robert Komer, Lawrence Korb, Colin Gray, and Paul Nitze combine to produce the collective point of view that the nation's objectives and strategy require a robust defense. Other authors could have been chosen, such as Earl Ravenal, for example, who would offer a much different picture—not necessarily a more accurate one. The result would have been a much more balanced view of the defense situation in 1985. Nevertheless, the authors that have been included are tops in the defense field.

In addition to the assessments, the *Annual* offers appendices on the events of 1985 and US force developments for 1986, as well as a bibliography of significant books on defense published in 1985. There are numerous charts, tables, and pictures scattered throughout the book, some more useful (and accurate) than others. There is an old axiom regarding tables—if you are going to use them, be sure that the numbers are correct. Some of the tabular data is suspect; for example, the chart on page 95 indicates that the US Army has only three Reserve divisions when the actual figure for FY 85 should have been nine; and on page 53, the first two lines of data showing SDI budget trends for 1986 and 1987 do not “track,” nor does the column total for 1987 add up correctly.

This book is not unique in attempting to provide a “definitive, up-to-the-minute, and politically wide-ranging guide to the major issues in US defense policy.” Every year, the Brookings Institution and the International Institute of Strategic Studies, to name the most prominent, publish assessments of US defense programs in some detail. The *Annual* does provide excellent tutorials on the budget process, arms control, and intelligence policy, but falls far short of being the definitive guide to US national security issues that it purports to be.

**Africa: The People and Politics of an Emerging Continent.** By Sanford J. Ungar. 527 pages. Simon and Schuster, New York. 1985. \$10.95. *Reviewed by Colonel Donald O. Clark, USA Ret.*

Sanford Ungar has done a remarkable job of delineating the political, economic, and social problems of the nations of Africa in a clear, concise, and thoroughly readable book covering the first 25 years of independence for most of the nations of sub-Saharan Africa. His task was complicated by the quick pace of events shaping the future of Africa in the past few years, but Ungar has captured much of the high hopes present at independence which have since been sobered by the harsh realities of international economic forces and savage droughts that have wracked Africa. His chapter on South Africa, the longest of the book, contains a thoughtful analysis of the problems involved with abolishing *apartheid*. It should be read by anyone hoping to understand the complexities of that troubled nation.

The book is not overly optimistic on the future of sub-Saharan Africa. Optimism is difficult in the face of the economic problems produced by exploding populations, bankrupt economies, over-farmed land, and ravaging drought—all as aggravated by accompanying political turmoil and frequent military coups.

Ungar has homed in on Nigeria, Liberia, Kenya, South Africa, and Zimbabwe more than on the other nations, but he does touch all the bases in sub-Saharan Africa by dealing with such distinct groupings as "American Clients," "Desperate Cases," and "Fallen Stars." While the categories may not flatter the states in these chapters, the factors presented by the author ring true to the realities.

The book is factual, readable, and of great value to a reader who desires to improve his knowledge of a continent that represents 20 percent of the earth's surface and is home for a half billion people, many of whom go to bed hungry every night.

**The Last Frontier.** By Gary L. Guertner and Donald M. Snow. 158 pages. Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass., 1986. \$20.00.

**Strategic Defense: "Star Wars" in Perspective.** By Keith B. Payne. 250 pages. Hamilton Press, Lanham, Md., 1986. \$9.95. *Reviewed by Dr. Michael Altfeld.*

It has now been over three years since President Reagan began an upheaval in US national security and arms control policy with his "Star Wars" speech. This has been sufficient time to allow analysts of strategic policy to debate the issues raised by the revival of strategic defense, and now book-length analyses of these issues are emerging. The two books at hand are fundamentally different in their approach, although they discuss many of the same subjects. Payne's book is an open advocacy of strategic defense. Guertner and Snow, despite their protestations to the contrary, offer a disguised plea for a warfighting strategy without defense (Colin Gray calls this option "suicide on the installment plan").

Because his preference for strategic defense is obvious, Payne can make his arguments more directly and clearly than can Guertner and Snow, who profess unbiased analysis. This is not, however, to say that Payne is unfair to critics of the SDI. Indeed, in this reviewer's opinion, he is often far too fair to them. Payne combines his fairness to the opposition with a powerfully reasoned case, which is likely to make Payne's book the standard answer to the question "Why SDI?"

The primary problem with the Guertner and Snow volume is that its analysis perpetuates at least two myths which are often taken for granted by many critics—and proponents—of SDI, but which are nonetheless false. The first of these is that a neat line can be drawn between defense of population, via area defenses, and defense of the strategic forces, via hard point defenses. In fact, many elements of our strategic forces and their supporting systems are soft targets requiring a high altitude (or area) defense for their protection. As a result, some degree of population defense will be provided collaterally to a credible defense of our forces. Moreover, adequate defense of even hard targets may require a high altitude overlay of the point defenses. Conversely, an area defense thick enough to protect cities would, almost of necessity, have to provide a substantial defense of the strategic forces.

The important distinction between population and military targets is not how they are defended, but their number. The gutting of its 100 largest cities would be a devastating blow to American society. To cripple the strategic forces, however, might require attacks on as many as 1500 separate targets. It is easy to see from this perspective how a defense of even modest effectiveness might preclude an attack on our armed forces, even if it could not prevent one on our cities.

This fact leads Guertner and Snow to the conclusion that a moderately effective area defense will simply lead each side to target the other's cities, which could still be attacked with massed forces. Indeed, this conclusion appears to constitute the principal point of the book. Unfortunately, it rests on the second myth: that the level of protection enjoyed by one's military forces will have no bearing on whether an opponent will decide to attack one's cities. This is to assert that a nation's leaders would be willing to attack the cities of a nuclear-armed opponent before that opponent's capacity to retaliate in kind had been crippled. Such a belief is far-fetched, to say the least. Even Douhet understood that the enemy's air force had to be destroyed before the devastation of his cities could begin. A more likely consequence of moderately effective defense is a return to the nuclear stalemate that existed before increased accuracy made warfighting strategies possible. Thus, the reality seems to be that defending one's military forces does (indirectly) defend one's population centers from direct attack.

It is high time analysts and politicians alike realize that the dichotomy between strategic force defense and population defense is a false one. Then they might begin to understand that while defenses directed at the enemy's initial launch are desirable, even point defense (to the extent it lowers enemy expectations of success in a first strike) can be justified by a desire to defend population.

**The Dogma of the Battle of Annihilation.** By Jehuda L. Wallach.  
350 pages. Greenwood Press, Westport, Conn., 1986. \$45.00.  
*Reviewed by Colonel Ralph M. Mitchell, USA.*

In a book which shows evidence of scholarly research, Jehuda L. Wallach investigates the teaching of two of Germany's military theorists—Clausewitz and Schlieffen—and attempts to show how their theories influenced that nation in war and peace. After comparing the two theories in his introductory chapters, Mr. Wallach contends that while Clausewitz understood the broadest intellectual implications of war, Schlieffen was more of a military technician with a fixation on Cannae maneuvers and battles of annihilation, losing sight of all other aspects of war.

From his study of World War I, Mr. Wallach concludes that Schlieffen's devotion to encirclement and annihilation influenced those who followed him (particularly the younger von Moltke and Falkenhayn) to prosecute the war on a narrow path. Had they understood Clausewitz, the First World War might never have begun. As it turned out, the military so dominated the political arm of Germany that the key decisions were all made by the military rather than their political superiors. With some understandable modifications, Schlieffen's course was then run, and the disastrous results which followed can be directly attributed to him.

Mr. Wallach then informs us that despite the influence of some detractors, the "Schlieffen School" remained strong during the interwar period. In World War II, despite a Clausewitzian flavor to the German victories through the fall of France, Schlieffen's concepts were still alive and found an advocate in Adolph Hitler. By not understanding and adhering to Clausewitz's theories, however, Hitler fell into the trap he had created with his "aggressive aspirations." Fixation on encirclement and annihilation and the denial of other Clausewitzian theories, such as the superiority of the defense, contributed to Germany's ultimate defeat. In two wars Germany paid the price for Schlieffen's theories.

Despite the absence of maps to support the innumerable geographical references, this book is useful for readers with a solid background in the history of the period. With his carefully chosen passages from Clausewitz's theory and his thinly veiled attack on Schlieffen, the author has created an argumentative edifice against which there is a clear counterpoint. One challenge for the reader is to analyze why the book contains so little theoretical discussion, the balance being heavily in favor of detailed, but selective, historical case studies from the two wars and the interwar period. A second challenge is to discern why the author chose particular examples to illustrate his thesis. It would seem that the discussion and comparison of the theories of Clausewitz and Schlieffen are inadequate in light of the detailed analyses of specific issues which follow them. Further, it appears that Mr. Wallach has done the same thing he accuses Schlieffen of doing—taking a pre-formed conclusion and seeking historical facts to support it.

After reading the book one is filled with a nagging doubt about whether the entire picture has been revealed. In short, Mr. Wallach's arguments are simply not convincing, and his analysis is challengeable. It would not be difficult to select passages from *On War* to show how great Clausewitz's influence was on German military thinking during the period.

The obvious bias against Schlieffen aside, Mr. Wallach has offered an interesting thesis about German military thinking through World War II. Right or wrong, he has surely stimulated further inquiry and investigation.

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## *From the Archives*

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### *Sergeant Shakespeare?*

Shakespeare's biographers lament the existence of a seven-year gap in the historical records of the great dramatist's life. Falling between his 21st and 28th years, and thus preceding the known beginning of his career as playwright, the so-called Lost Years, 1585-1592, have attracted partisans of various trades and professions, each of which would like to assign its own vocation to the young Shakespeare. But no claim is as strong as the military's.

The Lost Years embrace the period of England's bitter war against Spain, culminated by defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. Shakespeare reveals an intimate familiarity with the device of impressment ("the king's press" was misused "damnable"), and from his tone we can guess that he may well have tasted the rigors of the system personally.

But aside from his prime soldierly age, his country's war, and his knowledge of recruiting abuses, the most convincing testimony to Shakespeare's military service lies in the 37 plays, which reveal an astounding expertise in the lingo, customs, and practices of military life. Professor Paul Jorgensen devotes an entire book to elaborating the pervasive military context of Shakespeare's works. Shakespeare's editor, G. B. Harrison, speculates that the Bard did not spend all his youth near the theater. "When we come to look closely into Shakespeare's plays," he writes, "it is clear that he had an extraordinary knowledge of soldiers." Sir Duff Cooper, after a microscopic examination of Shakespeare's lines and scenes, concludes that the dramatist had served as an NCO in the Low Countries. Cooper titled his book *Sergeant Shakespeare*.

All of Shakespeare's great tragic heroes were soldiers, but it is in treating the predicaments of the enlisted men that Shakespeare's accents ring most unmistakably true. No, military service isn't glamorous: "Our gayness [is] besmirched with rainy marching in the painful field." No, it isn't pretty: "[The tired horses droop] down their heads, . . . the gum [hanging like a rope] from their pale-dead eyes, and in their pale dull mouths the . . . bit lies foul with chewed grass." Yes, frightened soldiers pump themselves up with philosophical bravado on the eve of battle: "I care not; a man can die but once."

Shakespeare's plays thus contain the "diaries" of scores of common soldiers. The photographic and psychological authenticity of military life there depicted, we are entitled to believe, could have been captured only by one who had experienced such life himself.

Sources: Paul A. Jorgensen, *Shakespeare's Military World* (Univ. of Calif. Press, 1956); G. B. Harrison, ed., *Shakespeare: The Complete Works* (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1948); Duff Cooper, *Sergeant Shakespeare* (Viking, 1950).