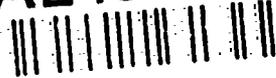
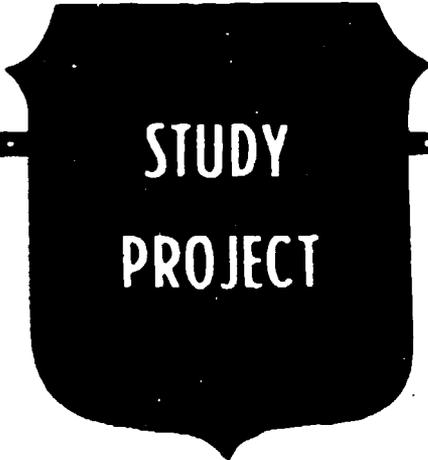


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**NAPOLEON'S JENA CAMPAIGN: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

BY

Colonel Thomas M. Hall, Jr.  
United States Army



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92-11697



92 4 28 295

## REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved  
OMB No. 0704-0188

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS			
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.			
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE			4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION US ARMY WAR COLLEGE		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)		7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION		
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) ROOT HALL, BUILDING 122 CARLISLE, PA 17013-5050			7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)		9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS			
		PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.	
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) Napoleon's Jena Campaign: A Critical Analysis						
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) COL Thomas M. Hall, Jr.						
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Study Project		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 15 April 1992		15. PAGE COUNT 45
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION						
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)			
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP				
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)  Studying military history is a vital part of an officer's military career. This study recommends Clausewitz' critical analysis as a way of learning from the successes and failures of the great captains of the past. It begins by presenting a description of critical analysis, discussing its value in the study of operational art and its benefits over other methods of study. A critical analysis of Napoleon's Jena Campaign follows. Finally, the lessons learned from the critical analysis are put into contemporary perspective by comparing Napoleon's operational art to today's doctrine.						
20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS				21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL <i>John J. ...</i>			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) 717-245-3207		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL AWC APB	

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

**DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public  
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**NAPOLEON'S JENA CAMPAIGN: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS  
AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT**

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Thomas M. Hall, Jr., COL, U.S. Army

TITLE: Napoleon's Jena Campaign: A Critical Analysis

FORMAT: Individual Study Project

DATE: 15 April 1992 PAGES: 45 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

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## NAPOLEON'S JENA CAMPAIGN: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

«Qu'un seul commande à la guerre, plusieurs volontés  
affaiblissent l'armée.»

Machiavelli<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

According to Machiavelli, one alone should command in war; several minds weaken the army. Today's doctrine refers to this as unity of command. While having unity of command is ideal, commanders-in-chief often must settle for unity of effort. In coalition warfare, even unity of effort is often difficult to gain due to operational and political realities. Because of this, doctrine teaches that a commander must make sure that all of his subordinates understand his intent.

Napoleon's Jena campaign in 1806 serves to illustrate this and other lessons that are valuable to contemporary military officers. For Napoleon, unity of command was guaranteed. He was the general-in-chief of the French army and the Emperor of France. Despite having sole command of the French army, Napoleon occasionally failed to get unity of effort because

he often did not convey his intent and concept of operations to his subordinates.

This is but one conclusion reached using the principles of Carl von Clausewitz's critical analysis. This paper will illustrate the technique of critical analysis and show how contemporary military officers can learn by using this method in studying military history.

Through the years, military officers around the world have studied the operational art of Napoleon Bonaparte. Some have deified him--all might have learned from him. There are many ways to study history and Napoleon's role in it. Critical analysis is but one.

Presented here are several points designed to illuminate the method of critical analysis. The first is a description of Clausewitz's critical analysis, discussing its value in the study of operational art and explaining its benefits over other approaches. A critique of the Jena Campaign will then establish the value of critical analysis within the context of contemporary operational art. Finally, a sample of the lessons, which were derived from the analysis of the Jena campaign, are presented. They reveal that today's officers can use history to train for modern campaign planning and fighting. What better way to learn than to fight along side a great captain?

### CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Studying military history is a necessary part of an officer's education. Most officers have read about and discussed the great battles and the great battle captains. Often, the analysis of a great battle revolved around the principles of war that were used successfully by the

leader in his victory. This approach to studying military history is similar to Monday morning quarterbacking. After knowing the outcome of an event and each contender's actions, an observer can criticize what was done and what could have been done better.

Critical analysis, on the other hand, is a different approach. As Clausewitz explains, critical analysis is "the application of theoretical truths to actual events."<sup>2</sup> Rather than being a Monday morning quarterback, the critic becomes the quarterback. He calls the plays without knowing what the opposing team will do, and especially, without knowing the results.

The advantages of the critical approach are obvious. Just as one does not learn to quarterback by second-guessing the players on the field, military officers do not learn the art of warfare by second-guessing the great captains. Instead, they learn by putting themselves in the commander's shoes. The theory of warfare, the operational art, should be a guide, and not become dogma to be followed by rote.

How, then, is critical analysis conducted? Clausewitz describes three steps: establish the facts; analyze the results (or effects) to determine the causes; and evaluate the means used.<sup>3</sup>

The first step is merely historical research and does not involve actual criticism of the commander's actions; nor does it involve the theory of warfare. But the analyst must know the facts, as well as they can be determined, before he can begin the critique.<sup>4</sup>

The remaining steps are crucial to the critical analysis. Once the facts are clear, the critic must figure out the causes of each effect. Did the infantry company fail in its attack of a fortified position because it

assaulted across an open field or because the enemy had overwhelming forces? Or were there other reasons?

Finally, the critic questions the means employed by the commander to get the job done. Did the commander employ his forces to the best advantage, did he use the terrain wisely, and did he know the enemy's capabilities?

Clausewitz points out the need for care in criticizing the commander's means. While the commander's actions can be compared against our doctrine, he cannot be condemned for every action just because it varies from the norm.<sup>5</sup> For example, a commander would not normally use a frontal assault in attacking a heavily fortified position. But, the analyst cannot offhandedly condemn a commander who chooses to make a frontal assault against a dug-in enemy force. "The critic should analyze the reasons for the exception. He has no right to appeal to theoretical principles unless these reasons are inadequate."<sup>6</sup>

The critic cannot limit his analysis to a commander's own mission. He must also consider the objectives of that commander's higher authorities.<sup>7</sup> While a decision may seem strange when viewed in isolation, it may have been the only choice that would support the mission of the higher headquarters.

Another way of looking at the means is to take the place of the commander on the battlefield. This requires studying the facts to know everything the commander knew at the time. Once in this position, the analyst can conduct the campaign himself. He can assess the situation, develop courses of action, select the preferred alternative, and develop the

operations plan. Unfortunately, he cannot actually execute the plan; he can only make informed judgments on the outcome.

In assessing the situation, all of the factors of "METT-T" will come into play: the commander's Mission; the Enemy forces and their capabilities; the Terrain; the friendly Troops available and their capabilities; and the Time available. The analyst must consider all possible courses of action, just as if he were planning for contemporary battlefield operations. "Critical analysis is not just an evaluation of the means actually employed, but of all possible means--which first have to be formulated, that is, invented."<sup>8</sup>

Once he opts for a particular course of action, the critic is obliged to prove that it is the best course of action. This "consists in taking each of the means and assessing and comparing the particular merits of each in relation to the objective."<sup>9</sup> The analysis of the alternatives must be exhaustive, and it must convince others that no other course of action is superior.

Critical analysis becomes difficult when one considers the enemy's possible reactions to the alternatives. While he knows the enemy's reaction to means employed by the commander that he is criticizing, the critic must deduce the reactions to his other possible courses of action. The most likely enemy reaction is important in evaluating the alternatives.

The analyst can play at this game forever, never completing the analysis. Like the opening plays of a chess game, the number of possible moves and counter-moves becomes large quickly. Clausewitz says that "a great many assumptions have to be made about things that did not actually happen but seem possible."<sup>10</sup> To reduce the number of moves that must

be considered. the analysis must lead back to the simple facts that were discovered in research--or it must lead to new results.<sup>11</sup>

Clausewitz also refers to another trap in conducting the critical analysis. Because the critic must study military history to uncover the facts, he will usually know the actual outcome of the battle. Just how bound is he to ignore those facts that could not have been known by the commander on the ground?

If the critic wishes to distribute praise or blame, he must try to put himself exactly in the position of the commander; in other words, he must assemble everything the commander knew and all the motives that affected his decision, and ignore all that he could not or did not know, especially the outcome.<sup>12</sup>

So, in the critique, the analyst should judge his courses of action considering the same information that was actually available to the commander at the time. He should not make his choices based only on the fact that the commander's course of action failed or that he now knows the actual disposition of the enemy's forces.

While he is trying to ignore those facts that the commander did not know, the critic will find it equally hard to know everything that the commander did know. Those who recorded the facts that were have found in the research cannot have known everything in the commander's mind. Even the commander's own memoirs "often treat such matters pretty broadly, or, perhaps deliberately, with something less than candor. In short, the critic will always lack much that was present in the mind of the commander."<sup>13</sup>

This, then, is critical analysis. It is an education. It teaches the student to think critically, to analyze the alternatives available to real

commanders in real wars, and to consider the reasons why some courses of action would work and why some would fail. While it cannot replace actual command of soldiers in combat, it can help the student learn the art of warfare before soldiers' lives are at stake.

### NAPOLEON'S JENA CAMPAIGN

Having developed the concept of critical analysis, the next step is to try an analysis. Napoleon's Jena campaign offers an especially good opportunity to try the technique for several reasons. First, Napoleon is a great Captain, studied by many military officers.

Secondly, he conducted the Jena campaign during the height of his successful military career. At the same time, he was the Emperor of France, making him the political leader as well as the military leader. This simple fact aids the analysis because there should be no divergence between France's political and military strategic interests.

Finally, and maybe most importantly, the General Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, published in 1922 an English translation of many of the documents relating to the Jena campaign. "These documents are practically complete. They include not only those documents which relate directly to this campaign but also documents which are indirectly related to it."<sup>14</sup>

This source book allows the study of the reports that Napoleon received during the Jena campaign and the orders that he issued to his subordinate commanders. The student can establish the pertinent facts, trace the results of the battles back to their causes, and examine the means that Napoleon used to fight the campaign. By following the campaign

one step at a time, the analyst can assume the role of the commander-in-chief of the French army as he is faced with his major decisions.

### BACKGROUND

In 1805, Napoleon had won a major campaign in Austria. The following year, Napoleon established a "Confederation of the Rhine" that would ally France with the southern and central German states. Saxony was invited to join the Confederation.<sup>15</sup>

Though ostensibly France's ally, Prussia was secretly negotiating treaties with England and Russia. Meanwhile, she also had designs on absorbing the German states. Prussia demanded that Saxony join in a "league of north German states" that would offset the Confederation of the Rhine.<sup>16</sup>

Simultaneously, Napoleon was negotiating with England. When the Prussian court found out that France was offering Hanover to England, it decided to fight. "On 10 August,<sup>17</sup> Prussia began mobilizing, intending to coax Saxony into alliance by overrunning her."<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, Napoleon had continued moving his forces to the west of the Rhine. He did not believe that Prussia was seriously considering war. On the 26th of August, Napoleon wrote to Marshal Berthier, his Chief of Staff, that they should not pay any attention to the Prussian mobilization. Rather, they should continue to return the troops to France. But, by the 2nd of September, he was directing Berthier to order reconnaissance missions in the area from Bamberg to Berlin.<sup>19</sup>

News that the Prussians had entered Saxony probably reached Napoleon during the night of September the 18th. He issued his first

instructions immediately, ordering his guard to march to Mayence (present-day Mainz). On the 19th and 20th, he ordered the Grande Armée to move to the area around Bamberg by the 3rd or 4th of October.<sup>20</sup>

Also on September the 20th, Napoleon directed that Königshofen, Kronach, and Würzburg be occupied and fortified as possible logistics sites. The same day, he wrote to his brother, Louis, the King of Holland, ordering him to begin deception operations by feigning a large build-up of forces from France in Holland. On September 19th, Marshal Berthier reported to Napoleon, who received the letter on the 24th, that the enemy was massing at three locations: Magdeburg (the main body), Hanover, and Hof.<sup>21</sup>

On September the 24th, Napoleon ordered Berthier to hasten the movements of the corps to their positions:

- Marshal Soult (IV Corps) to Amberg by 1 October.
- Marshal Davout's (III Corps) cavalry to Kronach to defend.
- Marshal Ney (VI Corps) to Ansbach by 2-3 October.
- Marshal Lefebvre (V Corps) to Königshofen by 2-3 October.

These movements put Napoleon's forces on line in defensive positions north and east of the Main and Rednitz rivers and south of the Thuringian Forest.<sup>22</sup>

#### PREPARATIONS FOR ATTACK

Napoleon believed the Prussian center of gravity to be the Prussian army. He "had already formed a general plan: a direct advance on Berlin from the Bamberg-Würzburg area."<sup>23</sup> The feigned build-up in Holland would threaten the Prussian right flank. Also, his lines of communication from France were secure behind the Grande Armée.

On September 29th, Napoleon wrote Berthier to move Bernadotte to the area around Kronach. He wanted Bernadotte to be in a position to interdict the route between Hof and Erfurt. The corps commanders were to place their cavalry units along the border with Saxony. He instructed all commanders to cover the mountain exits and to reconnoiter the routes into Saxony to their fronts. On the same day, Napoleon discovered a mistake in his previous orders to Berthier that directed Ney to Bamberg. He changed Ney's defensive position to Nürnberg.<sup>24</sup>

Berthier sent to Napoleon a collection of intelligence reports, dating from September 23-26. These reports suggested that:

- 2,000 enemy were falling back to Münchberg and Hof.
- 9,000 to 10,000 men were located at Hof, and an Army of 30,000 to 40,000 had entered Saxony, moving slowly.
- The King of Prussia was heading to Halle.
- A regiment was located at Meiningen, and a regiment was marching from Erfurt to Coburg. A brigade was covering Schweinfurt.
- 60,000 to 70,000 men were located at Hof; troops under General Rüchel were arriving in Eisenach, Gotha, and Erfurt; and there were about 120,000 to 130,000 troops near Halle, Leipzig, and Dresden.<sup>25</sup>

It is evident from the comments of Napoleon's marshals in this report, and from several of Napoleon's own letters, that the French Army's leaders did not hold the Prussian forces in high regard. They spoke of previous major defeats, slow mobilization, slow movement, and high desertions.<sup>26</sup>

Napoleon's immediate response to Berthier reiterated his intent to have V Corps (Lefebvre) around Königshofen, I Corps (Bernadotte) near

Kronach, IV Corps (Sault) at Bayreuth, and VI Corps (Ney) at Nüremberg. He told Berthier to insure that he got intelligence from Fulda on his left flank. Further, he specifically asked for reconnaissance along all routes of advance into Saxony from the area between Königshofen and Hof. In a letter to Marshal Soult, Napoleon also specified the positions of III Corps (Davout) at Bamberg and VII Corps (Augereau) at Würzburg.<sup>27</sup>

By September the 30th, Napoleon had decided to mass his forces further to his right. In an order to Marshal Berthier, he directed Marshal Lefebvre to occupy positions near Neustadt. Napoleon was considering attacking to secure Saalfeld before the Prussians could build up a sizable force there. Realizing that this move would uncover his lines of communication, Napoleon directed the cavalry to screen the left flank. On October the 1st, he retracted his order to Lannes and put him into a position between Schweinfurt and Neustadt.<sup>28</sup>

Simultaneously, Napoleon appointed Marshal Mortier to command the VIII Corps that was forming at Mainz. He instructed Mortier to cover Mainz constantly, yet be prepared to counterattack in the vicinity of Würzburg if necessary. He allowed Mortier to move the corps headquarters to Frankfurt.<sup>29</sup>

Prince Murat reported on October the 1st and 2nd from Würzburg to Napoleon the following enemy information:

- A corps commanded by General Tauenzien with 14,000 to 15,000 men was located at Hof. It was the advanced guard of the army of Prince Hohenlohe.

- The King of Prussia was in Gotha.

- The army was concentrating near Erfurt and Weimar. The Prussians intended to force one major decisive battle and to avoid small engagements. The Saxons had joined with the Prussians.

- The Prussians had not entered Fulda.<sup>30</sup>

Added to this, Marshal Bernadotte reported that:

- The King of Prussia had remained at Naumburg, near Auerstädt, for several days. He had 80,000 troops.

- Prince Hohenlohe's headquarters was at Chemnitz. A "small detachment" (2,000 men) under General Tauenzien was in Hof.

- The main force of the Prussian Army was assembling in Merseburg and Naumburg (some 30-40 miles from Erfurt and Weimar.)<sup>31</sup>

On the 5th of October, both Napoleon and Berthier sent orders to the corps commanders. In his letter to Marshal Soult, Napoleon wrote, "according to all information which I have today, it seems that if the enemy makes any movements it would be toward my left, as it appears that the main body of his forces is at Erfurt."<sup>32</sup> In the same letter, Napoleon outlined his entire concept for the operation. In letters to his other commanders, he merely gave them their own missions. Only to Soult did he relate his commander's intent:

- The Grand Army would advance on three axes into Saxony--the movement to start on October the 8th.

- IV Corps (Soult) would lead the right axis with VI Corps (Ney) to the rear. They would move from Bayreuth to Hof with about 50,000 men.

- I Corps (Bernadotte) would lead the center from Kronach through Lobenstein to Schleiz. III Corps (Davout) would follow I Corps. They had about 70,000 men in the center.

- V Corps (Lannes who took command on the same day) would lead the right with VII Corps (Augereau) following. They would advance with about 40,000 men from Coburg to Gräfenthal and Saalfeld.

- They were to attack forces weaker than 30,000, but not attack well-defended forces.

- Napoleon would remain with the center axis.<sup>33</sup>

It is unclear why Napoleon singled out Soult to be privy to the concept of operations in this case. He may have felt that Soult, being somewhat isolated on the right flank of the army, might be required to fight independently. The letters from Berthier to the other corps commanders added little to those of Napoleon in transmitting the commander's intent.<sup>34</sup>

#### ADVANCE INTO SAXONY

On the 8th and 9th of October, the French army advanced according to Napoleon's plan. The right column (Soult), finding that the enemy had pulled out of Hof, continued toward Plauen. As the preponderance of their intelligence still put the major threat on the French left flank, Berthier wrote to Marshal Lannes that the Emperor expected to find a sizable force to the V Corps front at Saalfeld. If so, Lannes was expected to fall back, drawing the enemy into a position between VII Corps (Augereau) and III Corps (Davout). Meanwhile, Murat with the cavalry and I Corps (Bernadotte) pushed General Tauenzien from Schleiz in the center.<sup>35</sup>

On October the 10th, Murat and Bernadotte were sent to Auma. At the same time, Napoleon discovered that Marshal Augereau had not been ordered to move from Coburg where he remained. Berthier wrote to Lannes

instructing him to hurry Augereau forward. As soon as he was supported by Augereau, Lannes was to attack Saalfeld.<sup>36</sup>

Napoleon wrote to Soult, as he did on October the 5th, describing his concept for future operations. He started with his view of the enemy situation.

The following is what seems to me to be clear: it appears that the Prussians intended to attack; that their left was to advance by Jena, Saalfeld and Coburg; that Prince Hohenlohe had his headquarters at Jena and Prince Louis at Saalfeld; the other column has advanced via Meiningen on Fulda; so that I am led to believe that you have no one in front of you, perhaps not 10,000 men as far away as Dresden.<sup>37</sup>

Napoleon expected that Soult would be in Plauen for the 10th and 11th. He repeated the orders given to Murat, Bernadotte, and Lannes. Marshal Ney was to move to Tanna, just south of Schleiz. From there he could support both the center and the right columns. Napoleon would have liked for the Prussians to commit themselves. He felt that if he were attacked, he could have won easily and advanced rapidly on Dresden or Berlin. By 1100 hours the same day, Marshal Berthier sent out orders directing Davout to Schleiz and Soult to Gera by way of Weida.<sup>38</sup>

The Prussian Prince Louis had moved all his forces to Saalfeld where he was met by Lannes' V Corps on the 10th. Prince Louis had chosen to place his forces "on low, open ground, dominated in front and flank by wooded heights, with the unfordable Saale River at his back." With his lead division, Lannes turned the Prussian right flank and backed them into the river. About 5,500 French soldiers defeated some 9,000 Prussians, killing almost one-third of them. A French sergeant killed Prince Louis during the battle.<sup>39</sup>

During the activities of the 10th and 11th of October, Napoleon formulated his plans. He still expected (and hoped) that the Prussians would attack on the east side of the Saale River. But, when the advanced parties of the central column reached Gera, they found that it had been evacuated the day before. By midnight on the 11th, Napoleon was still moving his forces toward Neustadt and Roda. In orders to Ney, Berthier directed VI Corps, which had started out following Soult in the right column, to move to Neustadt. At the same time, I Corps (Bernadotte) was at Gera; III Corps (Davout) was north of Auma; V Corps (Lannes) was marching to Pössneck; and VII Corps (Augereau) was at Saalfeld. IV Corps (Soult) was moving toward Gera.<sup>40</sup> Napoleon was massing his forces south of Jena along the east bank of the Saale.

However, during the remainder of the night, Napoleon received information from several locations that the Prussian forces had evacuated the area east of the Saale River. From all reports, they were now concentrating their total force on the west side of the Saale around Jena and Erfurt. Napoleon decided that the Prussians were planning to defend.<sup>41</sup>

#### PREPARATIONS FOR THE BATTLE AT JENA

After considering this new intelligence, Napoleon changed his orders to his corps commanders. He had decided to send two corps and Murat's cavalry forces to Naumburg. Marshal Davout with III Corps was to proceed directly to Naumburg from Auma. Prince Murat with his guards and Marshal Bernadotte with I Corps was to go to Naumburg via Zeitz to the East.<sup>42</sup> With this maneuvering force, he expected to envelop the Prussian

left flank if they were still defending at Jena. On the other hand, if they were retreating, he would cut them off from Dresden and Berlin.<sup>43</sup>

Simultaneously, through Berthier, Napoleon changed Ney's orders, directing him to Auma where his corps replaced those of Bernadotte and Davout in the center column. Marshal Soult's orders told him to remain in the area of Gera while Marshals Lannes and Augereau moved to Jena and Kahla (just south of Jena). Napoleon instructed his commanders to attack any enemy forces on the move and those stationary forces not superior to the attackers. Further, he instructed Lannes to gather as much intelligence as he could about the enemy around Jena.<sup>44</sup>

Yet, in his general orders, Napoleon did not include enemy information, his plan of attack and concept of operations, or the specific instructions for the various corps. Again, Napoleon sent Soult's instructions to him personally rather than through the Chief of Staff. Further, Napoleon wrote personally to Lannes, Murat, and Davout. But Ney, Augereau, and Bernadotte were left with only the knowledge of their own specific movement instructions. Marshal Augereau expressed his concern to Marshal Lannes, writing that his only instructions were to move to Kahla. Similarly, Marshal Bernadotte did not even know that Marshal Davout had moved to Naumburg. Due to his ignorance of the concept of operations, Bernadotte made decisions that would keep him from joining the battle at Jena on the 14th.<sup>45</sup>

On October the 13th, Napoleon received several intelligence reports from his commanders. These placed the bulk of the enemy's forces around Weimar, just west of Jena, and near Kösen, north of Jena. Murat reported that the enemy's reserve forces under Prince Württemberg were moving

south toward Halle and Naumburg to join the main enemy forces at Erfurt.<sup>46</sup>

Napoleon responded by ordering Ney to march with his corps to Jena as quickly as possible. Then he ordered Marshal Lefebvre with the Guard and Marshal Soult with IV Corps to Jena. Marshal Davout received instructions to remain in Naumburg. He was to maneuver to hit the enemy's left flank if he heard artillery fire. Within a short time, Marshal Bernadotte received two conflicting instructions--one from Murat and one from Davout. Although Napoleon had wanted him to move south to Dornburg, his last order led him to remain near Naumburg with Davout.<sup>47</sup>

Napoleon's general order for the battle at Jena was so specific as to leave little flexibility or initiative for his corps commanders. Nevertheless, the results of the battles on the 14th of October were overwhelming. Those corps fighting directly under Napoleon routed Hohenlohe and Rüchel in Jena and Weimar. On the same day, Davout, having set Bernadotte en route toward Dornburg, fought and soundly defeated Brunswick at Auerstädt.

### PURSUIT

By the end of the day of the 14th, Murat's forces had entered Weimar and were already pursuing the Prussians toward Erfurt. Murat wrote to Napoleon that he would continue to pursue the enemy from Erfurt.<sup>48</sup> At four o'clock in the morning on October the 15th, Napoleon gave the order to continue the pursuit that Murat had already begun with the cavalry--"a pursuit which was to annihilate the Prussian army and

complete the victory."<sup>49</sup> Marshal Berthier passed Napoleon's order to Ney (VI Corps), who was to support Murat, to march toward Erfurt.<sup>50</sup>

In a bulletin to the Grande Armée, written on the 16th, Napoleon stated his belief that the Prussians were retreating to Magdeburg. Then he wrote to Murat that Marshals Soult and Bernadotte (IV and I Corps) were pursuing two columns of enemy toward Nordhausen and Colleda. He prompted Murat to continue his pursuit relentlessly and directed him to keep his forces between the enemy and Naumburg to maintain internal lines of communication.<sup>51</sup>

As a result of this maneuvering, Murat, Ney, and Soult were pursuing enemy forces to the North from Erfurt toward Magdeburg. Bernadotte, Lannes, Davout, and Augereau were moving generally northeast toward Berlin. Only the Prussian reserves under Würtemberg were in their path.<sup>52</sup>

On the 21st, Napoleon directed Murat to move east to Dessau before crossing the Elbe. This maneuver put his forces in the eastern column, which was moving on Berlin. Then on the 22nd, he ordered Murat to march through Treuenbrieten to Berlin as quickly as possible. On the same day, he wrote to Talleyrand and Marshal Cambaceres that he was marching on Berlin and expected to be there within four or five days.<sup>53</sup>

Marshal Berthier wrote Davout on the 23rd, directing him to place his corps at the outskirts of Berlin by the 25th. When Napoleon arrived, Davout would be the first to enter the city in honor of his great victory at Auerstädt.<sup>54</sup>

By the 24th, Napoleon had diverted both Lannes and Murat from the vicinity of Berlin to chase an enemy force that was moving from Magdeburg

toward Stettin near the Baltic Sea. In effect, this new order left only two corps near Berlin--the strategic center of mass--and had four corps chasing remnants of the Prussian Army, which was all a considerable distance west of Berlin.<sup>55</sup>

Marshal Davout, with III Corps, entered Berlin at 10 a.m. on the 25th. Marshal Augereau arrived there on the 26th. Marshal Ney (VI Corps) remained at Magdeburg in a blockade of that city while Marshal Soult (IV Corps) continued the pursuit northeast from Magdeburg. Prince Murat (Reserve Cavalry) and Marshal Lannes (V Corps) chased Prince Hohenlohe to the north of Spandau. By 4 p.m. on the 26th, Napoleon sent his first orders to Davout to begin moving east from Berlin toward Frankfurt on the Oder River.<sup>56</sup>

Napoleon wrote to Monsieur de la Rochefoucauld in Vienna on the 26th of October claiming that the Prussian Army had been entirely destroyed. Yet, at about the same time, he wrote to Murat, saying that "according to all information which I have received, there are entire corps and columns, marching on Berlin," on Küstrin, and on Stettin. He directed Murat to march to Stettin by the 28th. (Davout had already been sent toward Frankfurt, near Küstrin.)<sup>57</sup> It seems that Napoleon believed that his presence at Berlin would entice the enemy to fight there.

Spandau fell on the 25th of October. Napoleon turned the fort into a supply depot for the French army. Meanwhile, during all his military activity around Berlin, Napoleon continually directed that nothing be done to Berlin itself. He did not capture it, bombard it, or lay siege to it. He hardly let his troops enter the town. Only military supplies and clothing were removed and taken to Spandau for storage.<sup>58</sup>

On the 27th, Murat defeated some of Hohenlohe's forces at Wichmansdorf. News of this prompted Napoleon to send out several letters urging his commanders to pursue the enemy with vigor. In two of these letters, he provided some insight into his true objective. To Murat he wrote, "To damage the enemy is the great object." In a note to Bernadotte he said, "No rest until the last man of this [enemy] army has been taken."<sup>59</sup>

But Murat needed no prodding. On the 28th his cavalry, supported by elements of V Corps (Lannes) met and destroyed the remainder of Hohenlohe's forces at Prenzlau (about 60 miles north of Berlin). They took 16,000 prisoners, including Princes Hohenlohe, August-Ferdinand, and Tauenzien. Murat sent General Lasalle after General Blücher's forces, which had turned and were retreating west. Stettin capitulated on the 29th of October.<sup>60</sup>

Even so, Napoleon was not satisfied with Hohenlohe's defeat. He wrote to Murat, "see that I learn soon that [Blücher's forces] have met the same fate." Further, he expressed concern about the Saxe-Weimar force of 10,000 men under the Duke of Weimar, which was pursued by IV Corps (Marshal Soult). Even after learning of the fall of Stettin, Napoleon told Murat that the job was not finished, "you still have 25,000 more men to capture. . . . You will have to capture General Blücher and the Duke of Weimar."<sup>61</sup>

Apparently, Napoleon would be content only with the total destruction of the Prussian-Saxon army. Yet, on the 31st, he still believed that Blücher had turned south along the Oder, heading back toward Berlin. He wrote to Davout at Frankfurt, telling him to scout toward Küstrin for the

Prussians. Also, he wrote to Soult to continue his pursuit of the Duke of Weimar.<sup>62</sup>

By the 31st, Bernadotte was directly on Blücher's trail, heading west toward Mecklenburg and Denmark. Murat, who thought that he was also on Blücher's trail, was moving westward, but he was north of Blücher's path. Soult was still chasing the Saxe-Weimar forces, which had, by then, joined Blücher's forces. In a letter to Bernadotte dated the 4th of November, Murat correctly identified Blücher's objective as Lübeck. By this time, the French forces had chased Blücher to within 20 miles of that city.<sup>63</sup>

After being assaulted by three French corps, General Blücher surrendered his forces, including the Saxe-Weimar units, at Lübeck on the 7th of November. The next day, Magdeburg surrendered to Marshal Ney.<sup>64</sup> With these last two capitulations, Napoleon had accomplished his operational objective--the total destruction of the Prussian Army.

During the final week, while Murat, Bernadotte, and Soult were pursuing Blücher and Ney was blockading Magdeburg, Napoleon had already shifted his focus. He had ordered Davout and Lannes to move into Poland. He had begun reinforcing his Army by moving Marshal Mortier (VIII Corps) and units from the armies in Holland and Italy forward.<sup>65</sup> He was already planning his next campaign.

#### **CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF NAPOLEON'S JENA CAMPAIGN**

Napoleon was highly successful in his conduct of this campaign. He met and destroyed the Prussian army with few losses on his side. He killed or captured most of the opposing Prussian corps and army commanders.

Looking back over the campaign, there are several decisions that could be studied with the aid of Clausewitz' technique of critical analysis. Yet, two stand out as excellent examples. The first is Napoleon's decision of October the 12th to split his forces, sending Davout, Bernadotte, and Murat to Naumburg to cut the enemy's lines of communication. The second area for analysis involves his decisions during the pursuit of the remnants of the Prussian forces after the battles at Jena and Auerstädt.

These two analyses are presented below. Together, they show how critical analysis can be used in the study of military history, and how contemporary military officers can learn valuable lessons--lessons that are applicable today.

It is worth noting that Clausewitz, by example, would analyze each decision at the point that it was made, suspending further study of the campaign until the critical analysis of the decision was complete. Here, the two examples of critical analysis are used to illustrate the learning that can be derived from the use of this technique. These examples are presented following a review of the entire campaign to link the critique more closely with the conclusions.

#### ANALYSIS OF NAPOLEON'S DECISION TO SPLIT HIS FORCES NEAR JENA

With his assembled force of about 140,000 men, Napoleon maneuvered into Saxony and soundly defeated a Prussian force of about the same size. On learning that the King of Prussia was planning to upset the balance of power in Germany, Napoleon quickly moved his army into position at Bamberg. Not knowing the precise locations or intention of the enemy, he

advanced in three mutually supporting columns until his forces began making contact with the enemy.

As the intelligence reports made the enemy's withdrawals and locations clearer, Napoleon maneuvered his corps for the attack. By sending Davout and Bernadotte to Naumburg and moving Lannes and Augereau to Jena, he hoped to envelop the enemy. At that moment, both Ney and Soult were in positions to reinforce the action either at Jena or Naumburg.

The results of the battle are clear. The Grande Armée had won a great victory. At Jena, the French lost just over 5,000 men of the 56,000 in the battle. Yet, the Prussians lost 11,000 of their 48,000 men with an additional 15,000 taken prisoners. At Auerstädt, Davout's corps had defeated a force nearly twice its size. While he lost 8,000 men, enemy losses totalled 12,000 killed and wounded, and 3,000 captured.<sup>66</sup>

Esposito attributes Napoleon's great success to the skill and initiative of Marshals Lannes, Soult, and Davout. Napoleon's plan disintegrated quickly, due in large part to the weather, Augereau's "stupid troop leading," and Bernadotte's "near-treasonous behavior." (Bernadotte had marched slowly during the day from Naumburg to Dornburg, even ignoring the sounds of the battle at Auerstädt and the request of General Sahuc to return to help Davout.) Napoleon "was fortunate, but he had earned his good fortune."<sup>67</sup>

Having reviewed in detail the facts surrounding the Jena campaign and discussed the causes of the results of the battle, it is important to evaluate the means that Napoleon used to get these results. Because of his dual positions as head of government and as head of the army, Napoleon

fought at the strategic and operational levels of war. Further, as was common in his day, he also directed his forces at the tactical level of war. This analysis will be confined to the operational and strategic levels. At the operational level, Napoleon's most important decision was to split his forces at Schleiz, sending I Corps and III Corps with Murat to Naumburg.

What were his alternatives? A review of the factors of METT-T will shed some light on the answer to this question.

**Mission.** Napoleon's mission was his own--from France's national interests down to the campaign plan. There seem to have been two centers of gravity: Berlin, the capital, was the strategic center of gravity; and the Prussian army was the operational center of gravity. Napoleon certainly focused his efforts on the operational center of gravity. His swift concentration of forces at Bamberg and his rapid advance into Saxony were designed to catch the enemy off guard, defeating its forces in detail.

**Enemy forces.** Napoleon had initially thought that the Prussians would attack him on the east side of the Saale River. As the operation progressed, he learned that most of the enemy forces were moving to locations west of the Saale River. From there they could attack, defend, or retreat. Obviously, Napoleon thought it likely that they would defend or retreat toward the Elbe River in the North. If the Prussians had intended to attack, they should not have assembled behind a major obstacle such as the Saale.

Several letters written by Napoleon give us some insight into the disdain he held for the capabilities of Prussian forces. He thought that their leaders were slow and too cautious in their actions and inflexible in

their tactics. He only seemed concerned that their past defeats might arouse a sense of revenge that would bolster their resolve.<sup>68</sup>

**Terrain.** Napoleon had chosen to advance into the terrain between Saale and Elster Rivers. When he decided to split his forces, the Saale was the major terrain feature separating him from the enemy. By locating between Jena and Weimar, the Prussian army had the Ilm River, a major obstacle, running along their rear.

**Troops available (friendly forces).** Napoleon knew his forces well. He had great confidence in Murat, Davout, and Soult. They did not let him down. Murat was practically everywhere on the battlefield. Davout was in charge of the maneuvering force. Because he was physically remote from the Jena battlefield, he was not subject to Napoleon's personal management of his battle at Auerstädt. Until the day of the battle, Soult was mostly on his own. Napoleon had chosen him to receive several personal letters detailing the commander's intent at various stages of the campaign.

**Time.** As always, Napoleon fought the clock. He knew that a quick reaction to the Prussian advances into Saxony would make his job easier. He wanted to catch the enemy before they could establish themselves.

With these factors in mind, Napoleon had several options. The first was the option he chose. As he expected the enemy to defend or retreat, he sent an enveloping force around its left flank. This force could have either attacked the enemy's left flank, or cut off its retreat while the force at Jena defeated it in detail. With this decision, he effectively split his force into two parts, each on its own and about a day's march apart.

His second option was to mass his forces to attack in an assault at Jena. This option resembles the attack actually made at Jena, but

concentrates all French forces for the attack. As the operational center of gravity was the Prussian army, the objective was to destroy that Army.

Given the terrain and enemy, one other option existed--a variation on the first two. In this third option, Napoleon could have massed his forces near Jena and used a maneuvering force to envelop the enemy's left. But, this flanking movement would have advanced through Dornburg. This option would make the attacking force at Jena and the maneuvering force mutually supporting. It would be a more traditional envelopment whereas the first option split the French forces, leaving them, as it turned out, to fight independently.

In comparing these courses of action, each has advantages over the others. And each has its drawbacks. Napoleon's choice, splitting his forces, gave him the flexibility to cover two drastically different enemy courses of action: fighting in place or withdrawing. It would certainly force a confrontation with the enemy force--the center of gravity.

By splitting the French forces, Napoleon ran the risk of being defeated in detail. In fact, this outcome was possible had the Prussians been more adept at the art of warfare. If the entire enemy force had fought together at Jena, it should have been able to defeat Napoleon's forces there. Likewise, if the entire Prussian army had retreated toward Auerstädt, it should have been strong enough to defeat Davout's lone corps. This conclusion is especially credible since Bernadotte's corps would not have contributed to the battle in either case.

By massing his forces for an assault at Jena, Napoleon would have had sufficient forces to meet and defeat the entire Prussian force on the Jena battlefield. Most of the intelligence received by Napoleon indicated

that the enemy was massing near Jena and Weimar, putting some 130,000 troops against him. He needed his entire army of about 140,000 to fight this force.<sup>69</sup> This option also had the great advantage of putting all of Napoleon's forces under his direct supervision. While this would not be such an advantage on the modern battlefield, it would have been an advantage for Napoleon. He often kept much of his concept of operations to himself and some of corps commanders needed close supervision.

By attacking with his total force at Jena, Napoleon would have left the enemy's lines of communication and escape routes open. Had the battle gone poorly, the Prussians could have withdrawn quickly, and unopposed, toward Auerstädt. This option would not have ensured that the enemy's center of gravity was destroyed.

Like option two, the third option, massing at Jena and maneuvering around the enemy flank through Dornburg, would have kept all of Napoleon's forces together to fight the massed enemy. Napoleon would have retained control of the entire battlefield, and he could have taken advantage of maneuvering around the enemy's flank. This alternative would have allowed the two forces to support one another. It would have made better use of terrain than the second option because it would not have crammed as many units into the areas just north and west of Jena.

On the other hand, this option would allow an adept enemy to escape. Also, it does not necessarily sever the enemy lines of communication. However, these disadvantages could have been minimized by a rapid envelopment by the maneuver force. Davout had already shown, by his march to Naumburg, that he could move his corps quickly.

This analysis leads to the choice of option three. Just as Napoleon set up in his plan, Davout should have commanded the maneuvering force. If the intelligence reports of the enemy were to be believed, the commander should have expected to meet the consolidated Prussian force near Jena. Yet, option three would have offered some flexibility to cut off a possible withdrawal. The commander should have made sure that all of his subordinate commanders understood the concept of operations, and especially, that Davout was keenly aware of the need for speed in his maneuver.

Why would this course of action be superior to that chosen by Napoleon? Napoleon's choice was incredibly successful. Yet, its success benefited from some good fortune. After Napoleon had split his forces, Brunswick pulled his 60,000 men out of the Jena area, splitting the Prussian forces. This kept the Prussians from massing overwhelming force in either Jena or Auerstädt and kept Napoleon's split forces from being defeated in detail. Even so, only Davout's skillful generalship and his unit's fighting spirit saved his force from destruction (he lost more than one-fourth of his men) against almost two-to-one odds.

Option three would rely less on good luck. Given the actual Prussian moves, the most likely outcome would have been overwhelming defeat of the Prussian forces remaining at Jena. Yet Brunswick may have escaped to join forces with Württemberg. If so, the French would have had another battle to fight on another day.

Looking at option three from a strategic level, Berlin was the strategic objective--the objective that satisfied the French national interest of retaining the balance of power in Europe. (This point is discussed in

more detail below.) By fighting the weakened Prussian force at Jena with the massed French army, the commander should have expected to suffer fewer losses than Napoleon did. With the full army, he could have continued pushing toward Berlin and pursuing the retreating enemy.

#### ANALYSIS OF NAPOLEON'S PURSUIT OF THE PRUSSIAN ARMY

Critical analysis notwithstanding, Napoleon, using his own plan, soundly defeated the Prussians and Saxons near Jena and Auerstädt. Yet, unanswered questions about Napoleon's strategic objective lead to a second point that is ripe for critical analysis--the pursuit of the Prussian forces after the battles near Jena. Napoleon's forces relentlessly pursued the remnants of the shattered enemy, covering hundreds of miles in just three weeks.

Following the victory at Jena, Murat, with his Reserve Cavalry, had already begun to pursue Hohenlohe and Blücher from Weimar. Napoleon's first orders put two of his corps in pursuit with Murat. He set the other four corps on a path toward Berlin.

On the surface, this decision looks good. The pursuit would clench the victory begun at Jena. The enemy was disorganized, and the pursuing forces were adequate for the job. More importantly, the major part of the Grande Armée was headed toward the strategic objective--the Prussian capital, Berlin.

During the pursuit, Württemberg was beaten at Halle, Hohenlohe surrendered at Prenzlau, Ney caused the capitulation of Magdeburg, and Blücher was finally caught and beaten at Lübeck. Finally, Berlin was in Napoleon's hands.

This remains one of the greatest pursuits of history. In three weeks of unrelenting maneuver, battle, and marching, the French gathered 140,000 prisoners, 250 flags, and 800 field guns. Except for its units in East Prussia and Silesia, the long-feared Prussian Army was completely destroyed.<sup>70</sup>

But, the subject of this critical analysis is not Napoleon's decision to pursue the Prussians. On the contrary, the issue is Napoleon's apparent decision to disregard his strategic objective in favor of his operational objective.

Before considering Napoleon's alternatives, it is appropriate, once again, to review of the factors of METT-T as they apply to this situation.

**Mission.** The centers of gravity had not changed. The strategic center of gravity, which should have led to political victory, remained the capital city of Berlin. The operational center of gravity was still the enemy's army.

**Enemy.** After the battles near Jena, the enemy was badly beaten, disorganized, and in full retreat. Many Prussian commanders had been killed or seriously wounded. Only Hohenlohe and Blücher remained as major players. The Prussian reserve under Württemberg had been left at Halle and never entered the battle. Napoleon's estimates of the size of the remaining Prussian forces varied, but the number was about 35,000 infantry and cavalry.<sup>71</sup>

**Terrain.** As the Grande Armée pursued the enemy north through Saxony into Prussia, the major obstacles were the Elbe and Havel Rivers. Eventually, the Oder River presented an obstacle to Napoleon's future plans, but it did not factor in the pursuit. Nevertheless, Napoleon used the Oder to his advantage, putting units at three points along the river hoping to stop the retreating enemy there.

Troops available. The Grand Army suffered relatively few losses at Jena and Auerstädt. So, the friendly forces remained nearly the same as discussed before.

Time. Again, Napoleon was keenly aware of the element of time. His forces maneuvered rapidly. In one case, when Hohenlohe retreated to Prenzlau, Murat's cavalry was waiting there for him.

Napoleon had several alternatives after the battles at Jena. He could have, first, declared victory and returned to France; second, pursued the retreating enemy force; third, marched directly on Berlin to take the capital; or fourth, pursued the enemy while also taking Berlin. When he issued his first orders to pursue, Napoleon gave the impression that he had chosen the fourth option. His subsequent moves suggest that he thought otherwise--it seems, instead, that he was following option two.

But, before analyzing Napoleon's motives, a review of the advantages and disadvantages of each course of action is appropriate. The first option would have had the advantage of "quitting while one is ahead." Napoleon had destroyed much of the Prussian army and its leaders at Jena and Auerstädt. In this state, they were no longer a threat to him or to France. The disadvantage of this option was that the strategic objective was not accomplished yet. Until Napoleon secured peace, he was not finished. Option one would not ensure peace with Prussia.

The second option is not entirely different from the first. It assumes that the operational objective had not been accomplished--a pursuit was necessary to ensure complete destruction of the enemy force. After the battle at Jena, Hohenlohe, Blücher, and Württemberg had about 35,000 men in their combined forces. If not eliminated, these forces could

have reorganized, joined with other Prussian (or Russian) forces to the East, and fought again. The pursuit, if successful, would have finished the job on the operational level.

The disadvantage of the second option, like the first, is that it would ignore the strategic center of gravity. It would not accomplish the political objective of securing peace. It would conquer the army, but not the nation. It would leave Prussia as a nation hostile to Napoleon's Confederation of the Rhine.

The third option focuses on the strategic center of mass. The objectives of this alternative would have been to conquer the Prussian nation and secure peace for France. These objectives were in France's national interest--they were the reason she went to war in the first place.

The disadvantage of option three is that it would neglect the operational objective. Though the Prussian army had been beaten, it had not been destroyed. While it was disorganized after the battles at Jena and Auerstädt, it could have reorganized if left alone. A peace on this basis may not have been a lasting peace.

The fourth option offers the advantages of both of the second and third options. It would continue the pursuit of the Prussian army, and it would secure the strategic and political objectives. The only disadvantage of this alternative is that it would require a larger friendly force than either option two or three. Yet, given the situation on the 14th and 15th of October, 1806, citing any major disadvantages of this alternative is difficult. Following the Prussian defeat on the 14th, Napoleon had sufficient forces to carry out this course of action.

When Napoleon sent two of his corps after the retreating Prussians and ordered four corps to move toward Berlin, it appeared that he was pursuing this alternative. But when one considers his pursuit over the three week period, it becomes evident that Napoleon's focus was not on Berlin as a strategic objective. Instead, he was intent on the total destruction of the Prussian army.

Despite moving forces to Berlin, he never took the city with the intent of securing peace for France. Instead, he quickly maneuvered his corps from the area around Berlin to meet the enemy's forces. Murat and Bernadotte joined the pursuit of Blücher. Lannes and Davout marched their corps to the Oder River in the East where Napoleon believed Hohenlohe was heading. These two corps would soon lead the Grande Armée in Napoleon's next campaign. Only Augereau remained near Berlin--for a short time--until Napoleon sent him east, too.

It seems that Napoleon actually pursued option two even though option four appears superior. Why is this option preferable? The answer lies in the basic French national interests that brought them into the war. At the time of the Prussian mobilization, Napoleon was moving his troops back to France, having concluded his campaign at Austerlitz. His "Confederation of the Rhine" would have established a buffer of friendly nations between France and Prussia, Russia, and Austria.

Prussia, unhappy with several of Napoleon's diplomatic and political maneuvers, decided to take Saxony by force. To accomplish his political objectives, Napoleon needed to ensure the sovereignty of Saxony, have it join the Confederation, and conclude a peace with Prussia on terms

favorable to France. Further, to help accomplish these political objectives, he had an operational objective of defeating the Prussian army.

Napoleon accomplished his operational objective. In doing so, he expelled the Prussians from Saxony, leaving that nation free to join the Confederation of the Rhine. Yet he never concluded a peace with Prussia. He demanded that Prussia surrender all territory west of the Elbe River, including Hanover and the Hanseatic ports, and that they join him in alliance against Russia. King Frederick William refused these terms, however, putting himself squarely in the Russian camp. By this time, Napoleon had begun maneuvering his forces to meet the Russians.<sup>72</sup>

Napoleon destroyed the Prussian operational center of gravity, but not the strategic center of gravity. As a result, he was forced to continue fighting. As the Jena campaign was ending, he was extending his lines even further into Prussia and Poland to deal with the Russians and another Prussian corps.

## CONCLUSIONS

### LEARNING FROM CRITICAL ANALYSIS

This is critical analysis. It is another way of studying military history--a way that helps the student learn military art from the masters. In the case of Napoleon, one can study his strategic art, his operational art, and his tactical art. The two analyses presented here looked first at an operational decision, then at a strategic decision.

By proposing competing courses of action and reviewing each, the student can begin to understand the reasons that the commander on the

ground opted for certain alternatives. This is especially true if one sets aside his knowledge of the historical facts that could not have been known at the time by the commander who was making the decision.

Critical analysis requires knowledge of the facts surrounding the decision as they were most likely known by the commander. It requires an understanding of the causes of the results of the decisions made, and it requires an analysis of the means used. In other words, the student must begin with a thorough study of the campaign or battle.

Before proposing alternate means--or courses of action--a review of the factors of METT-T can be helpful. Then a comparison of the alternate courses of action leads to conclusions about the commander's choice of means. If the analyst proposes means different from those used by the commander, he must prove that his choice is superior.

Doing all of this is an education in itself. It requires not only the study of history but also the application of the art of operational or strategic warfare. Once the analysis is complete, the student will have learned valuable lessons--lessons that are valid on the modern battlefield.

Besides practicing the art of warfare at the operational level, what can be learned from the critical analysis of the Jena campaign? Which of Napoleon's methods should the student strive to emulate, which should he learn to improve upon, and which should he reject? In completing this critical analysis, there were many areas that stood out. Three of these are discussed in more detail below: Napoleon's operational orientation; his failure, on occasion, to get unity of effort; and his lack of strategic focus.

## NAPOLION'S OPERATIONAL ORIENTATION

Napoleon has long been studied and emulated as an operational leader. The critical analysis presented here has shown that he understood the operational center of gravity in the campaign. He set out to destroy the Prussian army and he did just that--never losing sight of the objective.

Though the acronym METT-T is a modern-day mnemonic device, Napoleon understood its concept thoroughly. Besides his focus on the mission and the operational objectives, he knew and understood his enemy. He planned and executed his operations accordingly. He studied the terrain and his maps diligently. Not only did he work constantly with maps, but also he relied heavily on personal reconnaissance.<sup>73</sup>

He knew his commanders intimately. He had chosen them personally and had campaigned with most of them for years. He controlled everything in the campaign, so he always knew the positions and capabilities of his forces. This point will be discussed in more detail below.

Critical analysis of the Jena campaign has shown Napoleon's obsession with time--which usually translated into his demands for rapid movements. Colonel Vachée put it this way: "One of his principles of war was that time is everything, and he knew that lost time could never be regained."<sup>74</sup>

Napoleon's art of war was the art of 18th century warfare. But, having completed a critical analysis, the student can compare Napoleon's operational art with contemporary doctrine. For example, how does Napoleon's generalship look when compared with the basic tenets of AirLand Battle doctrine in Field Manual (FM) 100-5?

One of these tenets is initiative, defined as "setting or changing the terms of battle by action."<sup>75</sup> Using this definition and the Jena campaign

is an illustration, Napoleon was a master at applying initiative to his advantage.

But initiative also implies that one's subordinate commanders are willing and able to act independently "within the framework of the higher commander's intent."<sup>76</sup> Few of Napoleon's commanders were willing or able to act independently. And most of the time, Napoleon was unwilling to allow them to do so. This point is reiterated in the discussion of unity of command below. As contemporary commanders will not be able to influence personally the entire battlefield, they cannot afford to emulate Napoleon in his refusal to allow the use of initiative by his subordinates.

One can compare Napoleon's conduct of operations with other tenets of contemporary doctrine as agility, depth and synchronization. In the same way, the analyst can review such AirLand Battle imperatives as ensuring unity of effort and anticipating events on the battlefield.<sup>77</sup>

#### UNITY OF EFFORT

As general-in-chief of the Grande Armée, Napoleon was guaranteed unity of command. Yet he occasionally lacked unity of effort. According to FM 100-5, commanders must communicate clearly their concept of operations, or commander's intent, to ensure unity of effort.<sup>78</sup> Instead, "Napoleon reduced to the role of blind instruments of execution all those men who, by the nature of their duties, ought to have been conscious collaborators in his work."<sup>79</sup>

Napoleon did not normally communicate his intent to all of his subordinate commanders. The critical analysis showed that, at Jena, he

frequently communicated his intent to only one or two of his commanders. The rest were often given only the instructions for their own corps.

Even so, Napoleon often got unity of effort because he could personally direct his entire army on the battlefield. But at Jena he did not have personal supervision over all his forces. Although his subordinates needed to know his intent, his general orders contained no information on the enemy situation, no concept of operations, and no information on the roles of the various corps.<sup>80</sup> Partly due to Napoleon's failure, Bernadotte spent the 14th of October marching between two great battles, not participating in either.

#### LACK OF STRATEGIC FOCUS

A final area of interest is Napoleon's apparent lack of strategic focus. The analysis of his decisions associated with the pursuit of the Prussians after the battles near Jena showed Napoleon to be focused on his operational center of gravity.

Despite having moved his forces toward Berlin, Napoleon did not seem to consider Berlin as his strategic center of gravity. He appeared to use Berlin more as an operational focal point, thinking that it would draw the enemy forces into battle. As early as September the 30th, in a letter to King Louis of Holland, Napoleon wrote that "it is probable that the entire Prussian army of Westphalia will concentrate on Magdeburg, and that they will all proceed by rapid marches to the defense of the capital."<sup>81</sup> He certainly did not use the capture of Berlin as a means to strategic or political ends--peace.

As general-in-chief of the French Army, Napoleon was responsible for operations and campaigns. As the Emperor of France, he was responsible for the strategic and political leadership. It was his job, and no one else's, to secure peace with Prussia for France.

#### FINAL THOUGHTS

This paper has given a description of Clausewitz's critical analysis, reviewed Napoleon's Jena campaign, analyzed two of Napoleon's decisions, and drawn some conclusions from the analysis. This paper only illustrates two examples of critical analysis--many more decisions could be studied. In addition, the comparison of Napoleon's methods with contemporary doctrine has proven to be productive. Many of the lessons that can be learned from history are valid on the battlefields of today.

Despite Napoleon's faults, he remains one of the greatest captains of all time. Studying Napoleon and his leadership is well worth the effort. Using critical analysis as a technique for studying Napoleon, or any other great captain, is also worth the effort.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> From Machiavel, *Discours sur la première décade de Tite-Live*, quoted in Colonel Vachée, *Napoléon en Campagne*, (Paris: Libraire Militaire Berger-Levrault, 1913), p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. and ed. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 156.

<sup>3</sup> Clausewitz, p. 156.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this paper, I will use the terms *critique* and *criticize* in a judging sense, not a pejorative sense.

<sup>5</sup> Clausewitz, pp. 157-158.

<sup>6</sup> Clausewitz, p. 158.

<sup>7</sup> Clausewitz, p. 158.

<sup>8</sup> Clausewitz, p. 161.

<sup>9</sup> Clausewitz, p. 163.

<sup>10</sup> Clausewitz, p. 159.

<sup>11</sup> Clausewitz, p. 163.

<sup>12</sup> Clausewitz, p. 164.

<sup>13</sup> Clausewitz, p. 164.

<sup>14</sup> *The General Service Schools, The Jena Campaign: Source Book*, trans. Colonel Conrad H. Lanza, et. al. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: The General Service Schools Press, 1922), p. iii, (hereafter cited as *The Jena Source Book*).

<sup>15</sup> Vincent J. Esposito and John Robert Elting, *A Military History and Atlas of The Napoleonic Wars* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, 1964), p. following Map 56.

<sup>16</sup> Esposito, p. following Map 56.

<sup>17</sup> All dates are in 1806 unless otherwise noted.

<sup>18</sup> Esposito, p. following Map 56.

<sup>19</sup> *The Jena Source Book*, pp. 57-59.

<sup>20</sup> Colonel Vachée, *Napoleon at Work*, trans. G. Frederic Lees (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1914), p. 38.

- 21 The Jena Source Book, pp. 124, 126, 147.
- 22 The Jena Source Book, pp. 148-149.
- 23 Esposito, Map 58.
- 24 The Jena Source Book, pp. 159-160.
- 25 The Jena Source Book, pp. 162-164.
- 26 The Jena Source Book, pp. 101, 152, 164, 217, 229.
- 27 The Jena Source Book, pp. 164-171.
- 28 The Jena Source Book, pp. 180-181, 194.
- 29 The Jena Source Book, pp. 195-197.
- 30 The Jena Source Book, pp. 203-204, 211.
- 31 The Jena Source Book, pp. 214-215.
- 32 The Jena Source Book, p. 238.
- 33 The Jena Source Book, pp. 237-244.
- 34 The Jena Source Book, pp. 240-243.
- 35 The Jena Source Book, pp. 266-292.
- 36 Esposito, Map 60.
- 37 The Jena Source Book, p. 295.
- 38 The Jena Source Book, pp. 296-299.
- 39 Esposito, Map 60.
- 40 Colonel Vachée, pp. 45-46.
- 41 Colonel Vachée, pp. 46-53.
- 42 The Jena Source Book, pp. 307-308.
- 43 Colonel Vachée, p. 53.
- 44 The Jena Source Book, pp. 309-311.
- 45 Colonel Vachée, pp. 56-59.
- 46 The Jena Source Book, pp. 330-332.

- 47 The Jena Source Book, pp. 332-336.
- 48 The Jena Source Book, p. 341.
- 49 Colonel Vachée, p. 295.
- 50 The Jena Source Book, p. 355.
- 51 The Jena Source Book, pp. 361-363.
- 52 Esposito, Map 67.
- 53 The Jena Source Book, pp. 400-405.
- 54 The Jena Source Book, pp. 418-419.
- 55 The Jena Source Book, p. 430.
- 56 The Jena Source Book, pp. 432-433, 439.
- 57 The Jena Source Book, pp. 442-444.
- 58 The Jena Source Book, pp. 418-419, 430, 437, 446, 473.
- 59 The Jena Source Book, pp. 461-462, 464-465.
- 60 The Jena Source Book, pp. 470-471, 482.
- 61 The Jena Source Book, pp. 477, 493.
- 62 The Jena Source Book, pp. 493-494.
- 63 The Jena Source Book, pp. 502-507, 637-638.
- 64 The Jena Source Book, pp. 660, 663.
- 65 Esposito, p. following Map 68.
- 66 Esposito, Map 66.
- 67 Esposito, Maps 66 and 65.
- 68 The Jena Source Book, pp. 101, 152, 164, 217, 229.
- 69 Esposito, Map 58. Reports of enemy strength varied, but 130,000 is close to the size of the force that Napoleon knew he faced.
- 70 Esposito, Map 68.
- 71 The Jena Source Book, pp. 476-477.
- 72 Esposito, p. following Map 68.

- 73 Colonel Vachée, pp. 10, 257.
- 74 Colonel Vachée, p. 8.
- 75 Department of the Army, Field Manual 100-5: Operations, (Washington, D.C.: May 1986), p. 15. (Hereafter referred to as FM 100-5.)
- 76 FM 100-5, p. 15.
- 77 FM 100-5, p. 23.
- 78 FM 100-5, p. 23.
- 79 Colonel Vachée, p. 4.
- 80 Colonel Vachée. p. 56.
- 81 The Jena Source Book, p. 189.

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