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QUICK, DECISIVE VICTORY: DEFINING MAXIM OR ILLUSORY CONCEPT WITHIN ARMY DOCTRINE?

A Monograph
by

Major Frederick S. Rudesheim
Infantry

93-31494

School of Advanced Military Studies
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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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ABSTRACT

QUICK, DECISIVE VICTORY: DEFINING MAXIM OR ILLUSORY CONCEPT WITHIN ARMY DOCTRINE? By MAJ Frederick S. Rudesheim, USA, 47 pages.

With the approval of the Army's preliminary draft of its keystone doctrinal manual, FM 100-5, Operations, the terms quick, decisive victory is now an integral part of doctrinal lexicon. The introduction of this important phrase indicates the Army's principle focus in the prosecution of future military operations. This paper examines the historical concept of a decisive battle and relates it to the notion of a decisive campaign that produces decisive victory.

This study addresses the question: Is quick, decisive victory a useful maxim for the Army or an illusory concept that reflects political exigencies rather than military realities? To provide a basis for analysis, this monograph is organized in the following three major sections. The first section provides a nineteenth century backdrop to the evolution of the concept of decisive victory. It examines the preeminent decisive battle of the Napoleonic era, Austerlitz, and the related theories of Carl Von Clausewitz and Hans Delbruk. The second section traces the American military's search for decisive victory in the following four conflicts: the Civil War, World War II, Vietnam, and the Gulf War. The third section examines the contemporary basis for the inclusion of decisive victory in the Army's keystone doctrinal manual, FM 100-5, Operations. A discussion of the Weinberger Doctrine provides a critical link from the Vietnam experience to present day doctrine. A development of the concept of conflict termination helps define the parameters of winning and ultimate victory.

Finally, this paper examines current US doctrine concerning decisive victory and concludes the following two points: First. The end of open conflict becomes the conduit for the use of other elements of national power. More appropriately, it can be said that there can only be a decisive *"military"* victory. Second, the doctrinal treatment of the principle of perseverance in FM 100-5 most accurately couches decisive victory within the vague parameters of political exigencies. Decisive victory can fall outside the responsibility of military intervention and the Army's doctrine must allow for this. Likewise, the military may well find itself involved in a crisis that requires the application of military force with the full realization that a quick military solution is not possible.

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INTRODUCTION

> To be capable of decisive victory, the Army maintains the ability to defeat all advisaries through a total force effort. It produces forces of the highest quality, able to deploy rapidly, fight, sustain themselves, and win quickly with minimum casualties whenever deployed -- that is a decisive victory.[1]

With the approval of the Army's final draft of its keystone doctrinal manual, FM 100-5, Operations, the term quick, decisive victory is now an integral part of doctrinal lexicon. The introduction of this important phrase indicates the Army's principle focus in the prosecution of future military operations. This paper will examine the historical concept of a decisive battle and relate it to the notion of a decisive campaign that produces decisive victory.

At one time, a decisive battle could determine the outcome of a war between belligerent nations. This eventually gave way to the realization that a single, decisive battle was no longer possible. Armies became too large and the battlefield too extended to allow any one battle to decide an entire war. Quick, decisive victory, while an ideal proposition, may present many of the same pitfalls found in the search for the decisive battle. In combat, at whatever level of intensity, decisive victory is logically the desired

outcome. US involvement in recent conflicts (Grenada, Panama, the Gulf War) is characterized by quick victory with relatively low casualties of life to our forces. The notion of winning rapidly adds a key parameter to US involvement in future conflict. Is quick, decisive victory a useful maxim for the Army or an illusory concept that reflects political exigencies rather than military realities? An understanding of the historical development of this doctrinal concept is necessary to assess its utility.

To provide a basis for analysis, this monograph is organized into three major sections: 1) A Historical Perspective, 2) the American Quest for Decisive Victory, and 3) Decisive Victory: Its Evolution in Doctrine. The first section will provide a nineteenth century backdrop to the evolution of the concept of decisive victory. It will examine the preeminent decisive battle of the Napoleonic era, Austerlitz, and the related theories of Carl Von Clausewitz and Hans Delbruk. The second section will trace the American military's search for decisive victory in the following four conflicts: the Civil War, World War II, Vietnam, and the Gulf War. The realization that war could not be prosecuted by searching for the decisive battle was evidenced in the American Civil War. The Second World

War provides insights into the growth of firepower and technology as central to American prosecution of war. The lessons of the Vietnam Conflict convinced American decision makers that the only war worth fighting should end with a quick, decisive victory. The Gulf War provided an opportunity for the American military to prosecute a quick, decisive war. The third section examines the contemporary basis for the inclusion of decisive victory in the Army's keystone doctrinal manual, FM 100-5, Operations. A discussion of the Weinberger Doctrine provides a critical link from the Vietnam experience to present day doctrine. A development of the concept of conflict termination will help define the parameters of winning and ultimate victory. Finally, this paper will examine current US doctrine concerning decisive victory and analyzes the validity of the concept.

I. A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Decisive Battle In The Napoleonic Era

Intellectually, Napoleon's most distinctive quality may well have been his vivid imagination, which not only endowed many of his letters with high literary quality but also enabled him to envisage things as they

would appear after this or that series of moves was carried out. To this he joined a formidable capacity for calculation that, in at least one documented case, enabled him to accurately predict the location of a decisive battle several weeks before it took place.[2]

Napoleon's success at Ulm on 20 October 1805 allowed French forces to penetrate deep into Germany. But the French army faced a serious challenge from the allied armies of Austria, Russia, and Prussia. The Allies hoped to draw Napoleon into a trap and crush the Grand Armee with their combined forces. Their intent was not lost on the French Emperor. For Napoleon, one course of action seemed clear. He had to win a decisive battle that would shatter the allied armies and their will to wage war. The destruction of the allied army at Olmutz was the strategic objective.

> On going back from Wischau he (Napoleon) stopped on the highway about two leagues and a half from Brunn, near Santon--a small mound by the side of the road, a kind of rather abruptly truncated cone--and gave orders that it should be evacuated on the enemy's side so as to increase its escarpment. Then turning south he entered a high plain contained between embanked streams running from the north to the southwest.
> The Emperor slowly and silently went over this newly discovered ground, stopping several times on its most elevated points, looking principally toward the Pratzen. He carefully examined all its characteristics and during this survey turned towards us,

> saying, 'Gentlemen, examine this ground carefully, it is going to be a battlefield; you will have a part to play upon it.'[3]

Napoleon selected the battlefield for what would become the battle of Austerlitz a short time later. He arrayed his forces to create the illusion of weakness on his right wing, thus inviting an Allied turning movement. The Allies would see this as a perfect opportunity to cut the main road to Vienna and roll up the French army against the Moravian Alps. With the strength of the allied forces attacking Napoleon's weak right, the Allies would have to accept risk elsewhere on the battlefield. Napoleon believed this would cause then to weaken their center and right. The Allies reacted exactly as Napoleon expected.

The battle lasted from 0600 - 1640 hours on 2 December 1805. The French forces managed to repel the attacks of the enemy's strong left while achieving a breakthrough in the Allied center, eventually splitting the Allied forces in half. The combined arms efforts of the French eventually crushed the piecemeal counterattacks of the Allies. In those ten and a half hours the allies lost 15,000 (11,00 Russian and 4,000 Austrian) killed and wounded and 12,000 captured. The French lost 1,305 killed, 6,940 wounded and 573 captured.[4] The battle had served its purpose. Austria

was out of the war and sued for peace. The Russians also began peace negotiations. The Prussians, stripped of their support, never threatened the French with their army again. The decisive battle of Austerlitz placed Napoleon in firm control of central Europe.

Clausewitz on Decisive Victory

Carl von Clausewitz, preeminent military theorist of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, stated that major battle should be regarded as concentrated war, as the center of gravity of the entire conflict or campaign.[5] The aim of war is the defeat of the enemy forces. Clausewitz further pointed out that a force does not necessarily have to take an enemy's entire territory in order to be victorious:

> If Paris had been taken in 1792 the war against the Revolution would almost certainly for the time have been brought to an end. There was no need for the French armies to have been defeated first, for they were not in those days particularly powerful. By 1814, the capture of Paris would not have seriously affected Napoleon's army. In 1805 Austerlitz was decisive. The possession of Vienna and two-thirds of the Austrian territory had not sufficed to bring about peace. On the other hand, after Austerlitz the fact that Hungary was still intact did nothing to prevent peace being made. The ultimate substance of enemy strength must be traced back to the fewest possible sources, and ideally one alone.[6]

Delbruk and Exhaustion vs. Annihilation

Nineteenth century German historian Hans Delbruk provided a significant contribution to the understanding of modern warfare. He believed there were two separate methods of conducting war. Delbruk found that Clausewitz espoused much the same thought. In a note written in 1827, Clausewitz wrote of two clearly distinct methods of war. He stated that the first method was focused solely on the annihilation of the enemy, the second involved limited war. Limited war was chosen when annihilation was impossible for a variety of reasons. These reasons ranged from relatively limited political aims to military means that were inadequate to accomplish annihilation.[7] Delbruk determined to accept the distinction and expound the principles inherent in each.

The first form of warfare was the strategy of annihilation. Delbruk also called it the strategy of a single pole [battle]. Its concept was simple. The sole aim of a strategy of annihilation was the decisive battle, and the commanding general was called upon only to estimate the possibility of fighting such a battle in a given situation.

The second type of strategy Delbruck called the strategy of exhaustion. This concept representd a much

more complicated method of war. It was distinguished from the strategy of annihilation by the fact "that the strategy of exhaustion had two poles, battle and maneuver, between which the decisions of the general moved."[8] In the strategy of exhaustion, the battle is merely one of several equally effective means of attaining the political ends of the war and is essentially no more important than the occupation of territory, the destruction of the enemy's crops or commerce, or a blockade. With limited resources at the general's disposal, he must decide which of several means of conducting war will best suit his purpose--when to fight and when to maneuver, when to assume risk and when to avoid contact and decisive engagement.

According to Delbruk, the decision is a subjective one, because at no one time are circumstances and conditions known completely and authoritatively. After careful consideration of all the circumstances the general must weigh all of the following factors to decide whether a battle is advisable or not: the aim of the war, the size of combat forces, the political repercussions, the personality of the enemy commander, and the support of the government and the enemy population. It is the general who determines if any

greater actions must be avoided at all costs; he can also determine to seek [battle] on every occasion so that there is essentially no difference between his conduct and that of a one pole strategy [annihilation].[9]

Many critics missed the deeper significance of Delbuck's strategic theory. History showed that there could be no single theory of strategy, correct in every age. Like all phases of warfare, strategy was ultimately connected with politics, with life and the strength of the state.

Delbruk noted that in the Western Europe nations sought the decisive battle in vain. Turning to history, Delbruk argued that the example of Napoleon should serve as a warning to German political leaders. The emperor's most overwhelming victories had served only to strengthen the will of his opponents and to pave the way for his ultimate defeat.

Hans Delbruk contributes much to the discussion of decisive victory. His two strategies of warfare provide a framework for examining the nature of a specific conflict. A strategy of annihilation seeks rapid, decisive victory. A strategy of exhaustion seeks to achieve advantage, perhaps outright winning, but without the clear mandate to do so quickly. Attrition

of the enemy force takes place with both strategies, only much more quickly with the strategy of annihilation. This paper will use these strategies, as defined by Delbruk, in the subsequent discussion of American conflicts.

II. THE AMERICAN QUEST FOR DECISIVE VICTORY

The Civil War

The Civil War was fought using the close-order infantry assault. As Russell Weigley points out in his work, The American Way of War, no other method of attack permitted adequate communication among the attacking troops or could muster enough weight to break the enemy's lines and achieve Napoleonic results. The war was beginning to reveal that the rifled weapons extracted horrendous losses from such attacks.[10]

Even with the Union divided, the days when the United States was compelled to wage war patiently were long gone. The image of Napoleonic war with its brief, climactic battles had "impressed itself upon the popular mind"[11] as well as upon the general officers. This contributed to the impatience to end wars quickly and decisively.

The North had to win as quickly as possible, but it faced several obstacles that threatened to prolong the war. Northern sentiment in support of the Union's war against the South was much more divided than the Southern sentiment supporting the defense of the Confederacy. The very fact that the principal object of the North could be construed as aggressive while that of the South was defensive made for divisions of opinion in the North. The Democratic party in the North suffered mixed feelings about the war from the beginning. Lincoln's Republican party never did achieve a decisive electoral margin, and the Democrats feared the war would subvert the constitution and guarantee Republican political ascendancy. The abolition of slavery--eventually established as a second Northern objective in the war--also produced intensely divisive effects in the North. It touched the ever sensitive issue of race.[12]

All of these factors made not merely victory, but quick victory, the illusive objective of the Lincoln government. Even after Gettysburg, the Confederacy still retained hope of survival if the Democratic Party could win the presidential election of 1864. The Anaconda plan--the calling for a blockade and gradual military pressure against the Confederate land

frontiers--seemed sure to produce military victory if the North had enough time; but Lincoln was never certain of that scarce resource. The impatience that produced the battle of First Bull Run was a direct result of the Northern efforts to seek quick victory.

Although General Lee adopted a defensive strategy, he sought tactical offensive action. The North accepted an offensive strategy by necessity. The quest for rapid offensive success produced many of the same problems for both the North and South. The effort to maintain an offensive strategy at the tactical level by means of decisive Napoleonic battle bled Lee's army to exhaustion. Similar efforts by the North would bleed Union armies too. This was the very loss that a rapid victory and a resolute offensive strategy were supposed to avert.[13]

Although Grant rejected the Napoleonic glorification of battle, he accepted a Napoleonic strategy of annihilation as the prescription for victory in a war of popular nationalism. Grant believed that the final defeat of the Confederacy would require the destruction of the two principal Confederate armies, Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and Joe Johnston's Army of Tennessee. Grant proposed a strategy of annihilation based upon the principle of

concentration and mass, hitting these main Confederate armies with the concentrated thrust of massive Federal forces until the Confederate armies were smashed into impotence.[14]

General Grant did not envision the destruction of the enemy armies in a single battle in the age of rifled firearms. Unlike Lee, he controlled enough resources to make a strategy of annihilation feasible and not unrealistic.[15] Grant was criticized for the high number of casualties tha resulted from the campaign to destroy Lee's army. According to Weigley,

> His answer to criticism was that it was better to suffer heavy losses to achieve the objective of the war than to suffer heavy losses for the stalemate in which the eastern armies had floundered for three years. His method of achieving the destruction of the enemy army was not to seek the Austerlitz battle, a method which had been tried in the East for three years by both sides and found wanting.[16]

Grant expanded the concept of battle until the battle became synonymous with the whole campaign. He would fight continuously, keeping the enemy army always within his own army's grip, allowing no opportunity for deceptive maneuver, pounding away until his superior resources enabled the Federal armies to win while the enemy army at last disintegrated.

World War Two--The Ascendancy of Firepower

By the time the United States entered the Second World War the American interwar emphasis on a strategy of annihilation as the only sure road to victory seemed a sound method for prosecuting war. Colonel Naylor, in his 1922 US Army Command and General Staff text titled Principles of Strategy, reaffirmed the Clausewitzian notion that the object of warfare is the destruction of the enemy's armed forces, and that this object can only be attained by fighting. Colonel Naylor wrote:

> I wish to stress this point; that warfare means fighting, and that war is never won by maneuvering, not unless that maneuvering is carried out with the idea of culminating in battle . . . Disabuse your mind of the idea that you can place an army in a district so vital to the enemy that he will say "What's the use" and sue for peace. history shows that the surest way to take the fighting spirit out of a country is to defeat its main army. All other means calculated to bring the enemy to his knees are contributory to the main proposition, which is now, as it has ever been, namely; the defeat of his main forces.[17]

The evolving US doctrine agreed with Naylor. FM 100-5, Operations, dated 22 May 1941, stated:

> The purpose of offensive action is the destruction of the hostile enemy forces. To facilitate the accomplishment of this purpose the commander selects a *physical object* such as a body of troops, dominant terrain, a center of lines of communication or other vital area in the hostile rear for his attack.

> The merits of a strategy of annihilation, the destruction of the enemy's armed forces, seemed still viable as the most certain and probably the most rapid route to victory. US strategic planners adopted the same approach.[18]

Major Albert C. Wedemeyer of the War Plans Division of the War Department General Staff believed that military manpower needed to be calculated before the necessary material resources were considered. The basis of his calculations was a strategy of direct confrontation with the German armies to destroy them and thereby break the German will to resist. The combined effects of air and ground achieved the goals of the Americans' strategy of annihilation against Nazi Germany.

The losses in the Allied Armies due to the effects of a strategy of annihilation were ameliorated by the tremendous contribution of the Russians, who confronted the bulk of the German Army and suffered the heaviest losses. The costs of the strategy of annihilation and of the war of mass and concentration were limited to tolerable levels for the Western Allies only by the sacrifices and the hard fighting of the Russians.[19]

The Long Shadow of Vietnam

In 1964, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Maxwell Taylor were in South Vietnam to evaluate the counterinsurgency effort. The visit provided confirmation of the negative reports they had received since the fall of President Diem. In reaction to their visit, the administration canceled the planned phaseout of US advisory personnel.

Subsequently, the Secretary Of Defense endorsed a list of recommendations from a Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) staff study. The proposal called for an increase in the size of the South Vietnamese Air Force, increased compensation for the paramilitary forces, the creation of an offensive Vietnamese guerrilla force, and the introduction of more M113 armored personnel carriers into South Vietnam.[20] McNamara's report was strenuously criticized by both the Army and the other services, who were convinced that the reason that more forceful action was not being taken was Johnson's upcoming campaign for the presidency.[21]

Lieutenant General Paul D. Harkins was assigned as Commander, MACV in 1962. By 1964, Secretary McNamara apparently had grown suspicious of Harkin's optimistic

picture of the situation in South Vietnam. On 20 June 1964, General William Westmoreland replaced General Harkins. Harkins had continued holding out the prospect of quick progress if only MACV were given more leeway. According to Westmoreland, when McNamara asked Harkins how long it would take to pacify South Vietnam in the wake of the disasters of the past year, he replied, "Mr. Secretary, I believe we can do it in six months. If I am given command of the Vietnamese, we can reverse this thing immediately."[22]

On 3 November 1964, a National Security Council (NSC) working group was established by President Johnson to study "immediately and intensively"[23] the future courses of action and alternatives available to the United States in Southeast Asia. The group, chaired by Assistant Secretary of State William P. Bundy, consisted of members from the Far Eastern desk at the State Department, International Security Affairs (ISA), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) staff. Throughout the life of the group, Vice Admiral Lloyd M. Mustin from the JCS maintained a hawkish stance. He minimized the potential problems presented by other members of the group if the US became directly involved in the war, while maximizing the danger of America's position around the

world if it failed to act decisively. In criticizing a section of the group's draft report written by Bundy, Mustin downplayed the lack of popular support for the government of South Vietnam with his contention that "a resolute United States would ensure, amongst other things, that this lack of popular support were cured, as the alternative to accepting the loss [of South Vietnam]."[24]

In downplaying Bundy's concern over the failure of the French to hold Indochina, the admiral stated that the French were defeated by "political delays and indecisions" which "tolerated if not enforced the fiasco." He remarked, somewhat prophetically, that the American military was not the French military and they would "make sure we don't repeat their mistakes."[25]

The JCS criticized the options proposed by the working group as half measures. The message was very clear: either go all-out to achieve a military victory, using whatever means necessary, or withdraw completely.

On 20 April 1965, Secretary of Defense McNamara held a conference in Honolulu. The conference's conclusion was that it "would take more than six months, perhaps a year or two, to demonstrate Viet Cong (VC) failure in the South."[26] The only strategy for victory was one of negative purpose. The US would break

the will of the North Vietnamese and the VC by denying them victory.[27] For the first time ever, the United States military adopted Delbruk's strategy of exhaustion over annihilation

The lack of progress in defeating the insurgents during the period 1965-68 can be attributed, in part, to an Army strategy which reflected traditional methods of operation in a conflict that was dramatically different from earlier conflicts. In a sense, simple attrition of insurgent forces and support systems was a natural strategy for MACV to pursue. It emphasized the Army's strong suit in firepower and strategic mobility and offered the prospect of minimal US casualties. The Army, denied the opportunity to win the decisive battle of annihilation by invading North Vietnam, found the exhaustion strategy best fit the kind of war it was prepared to fight.

A strategy of exhaustion offered the Army the hope of winning the war quickly, or at least more quickly than through the use of counterinsurgency operations, which promised to be long and drawn out. The use of munitions over soldiers is a product of the American way of war: spend lavishly on weapons, materiel, and technology to save lives (US lives). The US military leaders believed in the morale-raising and life-saving

value of massive firepower whose success they had witnessed in World War Two and Korea. A strategy of exhaustion through steady attrition was a natural outgrowth of the force structure and doctrine developed by the Army. The units deployed to Vietnam in the summer of 1965 were not the same special warfare forces the Army used for counterinsurgency operations. They sent heavy units trained and equipped for mid-intensity warfare. The Army, according to General Taylor, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, felt compelled to adopt a strategy of exhaustion because of the political ground rules that confined the Army's operations within the Republic of Vietnam.[28] If the Army was denied a battle of annihilation through the invasion of North Vietnam, then exhaustion was the next best thing available.

It can be argued that the strategy of exhaustion was not a strategy at all but actually the absence of one. The sheer weight of American materiel and resources seemed sufficient to the military leadership to wear down the North Vietnamese and their VC allies. All that was needed was efficient application of firepower. It would be tried in Vietnam.

According to Westmoreland, "superior American firepower would be the most advantageously employed

against the big units, and using it in remote regions would mean fewer civilians casualties and less damage to built up areas."[29] The unspoken question remains: What if the enemy's big units refuse to fight? Vietnam left a lasting impression on American decision makers. The years following the final withdrawal of American forces caused extensive soul searching between the military leadership and the civilian policymakers. Everyone agreed that there would not be another Vietnam.

The Gulf War

In the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations (KTO), Iraq lost 3,847 tanks, 1,450 fighting vehicles, and 2,917 artillery pieces. 1,600 tanks and over 500 combat aircraft still remained.[30] The Persian Gulf War achieved its military objectives by ejecting Iraq from Kuwait and eliminating the offensive military power of Iraq. There could be no doubt that America and its allies had triumphed over Iraq's army on the battlefield. But inasmuch as victory suggests the decisive defeat of the opponent, there was none.

On 16 January 1991, in a message to the American people that coincided with the beginning of the

coalition air war, President Bush restated the strategic objectives of the campaign. He said; "Our objectives are clear. Saddam Hussein's forces will leave Kuwait. The legitimate government of Kuwait will be restored to its rightful place, and Kuwait will once again be free."[31]

On 22 January 1991, General Collin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, briefed the American people on the allied strategy for the war. He stated; "We're going to cut off the Iraqi army in Kuwait; then we're going to kill it."[32] The US military was intent on Delbruk's strategy of annihilation.

The operational plan that emerged was designed to meet the strategic objectives articulated by the President. On 27 February 1991, just one day before the cease fire, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander in Chief of Central Command, laid out the operational plan in a historic briefing for the media. He first spoke of the extensive air campaign that isolated the KTO and reduced Iraqi forces to a more favorable force ratio. On the ground, the plan called for limited forces to conducted a direct assault on Iraqi defenses while the bulk of the coalition forces executed a sweeping attack around the western flank of the enemy's defenses. This "Hail Mary Play," using General Schwartzkopf's illusion

to the all-or-nothing football play, was a resounding success. The war would last only 42 days. The ground war took only one hundred hours.

Some have argued that the Coalition forces should have pursued the Republican Guard to destroy them. The difficulty lies in translating these efforts into military success. No one in America wanted to occupy Iraq indefinitely. Saddam Hussein remained firmly in control of the Iraqi military. President Bush's call for the Iraqi people to rise up and remove him went generally unanswered. The President would express disappointment on several occasions that Hussein remained in power. But in the President's words, "That in no way diminishes the highly successful effort to stop the aggression against Kuwait."[33]

The US military achieved rapid military success with a minimum number of casualties. The issue of decisiveness hinges on the strategic objectives as articulated by the President. The military did its part, but the political realities of the postwar Middle East region point to a postponement rather than a resolution of the issues concerning Iraq. The conflict was terminated because of the coercive leverage brought to bear by the military. The imposition of the Coalition's will ended the immediate hostilities but

left unresolved the more lasting issue regarding Iraq and the future machinations of Saddam Hussein. Hussein, called the ultimate survivor, relented only after sufficient military coercive leverage was applied. The Coalition was denied a decisive victory in the broader strategic context. Less than a year after the war had ended, Iraq had rebuilt its army to a size more potent than any of its neighboring countries.[34]

IV. DECISIVE VICTORY: AN EVOLUTION IN DOCTRINE

The Weinberger Test

The following are Weinberger's Six major tests to be applied when weighing the use of US combat forces abroad.

> - The United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement of occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies.
> - If we decide it is necessary to put combat troops in a given situation, we should do so whole heatedly and with the clear intention of winning. Of course, if the particular situation requires only limited force to win our objectives, then we should not hesitate to commit forces sized accordingly.
> - If we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. As Clausewitz wrote, " No one starts a war - or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so - without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war, and how he intends to conduct it ."

- The relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed - their size, composition and disposition - must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary.
- Before the United States commits forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress.
- The commitment of US. forces to combat should be a last resort.[35]

In 1984, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger proposed these tests to determine the feasibility of using American combat troops abroad. In an address to the National Press club in Washington D.C., Secretary Weinberger outlined the circumstances in which the United States would reach the painful decision that the use of military force was necessary to protect its interests or to carry out its national policy. For Weinberger, these were perhaps the most important question concerning keeping the peace.

While the use of military force for self defense has never been questioned when a democracy has been attacked and its survival threatened, most democracies have rejected unilateral use of force. The extent to which the use of force is acceptable remains unresolved for the host of other situations that fall between the extremes of self defense and aggressive use of force.

Secretary Weinberger identified what he called a modern paradox: The most likely challenges to peace--

the gray area conflicts--are precisely the most difficult challenges to which democracy must respond.[36] While that source and nature of the challenge may be uncertain, our response must be clear and understandable. Unless we are certain that the use of force is essential, we run the risk of inadequate national will to apply the resources needed.

Because we face a spectrum of threats--from covert aggression, terrorism, and subversion to overt intimidation and the use of brute force--choosing the appropriate level of rational response is often difficult. But once our government has made a decision to use force, it must have a clear mandate to carry out that decision. While the US must not seek to deter or settle all the world's conflicts, we must recognize that, as a major power, our responsibilities and interests are now of such scope that there are few troubled areas we can completely ignore.

In an international system based on mutual interdependence among nations and alliances between friends, stark isolationism quickly would lead to a far more dangerous situation for the United States. Secretary Weinberger understood that policies formed without a clear understanding of what we hope to achieve would also earn us the scorn of our troops, who

would have an understandable opposition to being used--in every sense of the word--casually and without intent to support them fully.

Regardless of whether conflicts are limited or threats are ill defined, the US must be capable of quickly determining that the threats and conflicts either do or do not affect the vital interests of the United States and its allies and then respond appropriately. When our vital national interests and those of our allies are at stake, we cannot ignore our requirement to respond. Conversely, the US cannot assume the responsibility to defend the territory of other sovereign nations without their express invitation and when our own freedom is not threatened.[37]

When it is necessary for our troops to be committed to combat, we must commit them as effectively and resolutely as our strength permits. When we commit our troops to combat we must do so with the sole object of winning. Secretary Weinberger reemphasized the point that if we ever decide to commit forces to combat, we must support those forces to the fullest extent of our national will for as long as it takes to win.[38]

He cautioned against the gradualist incremental approach that almost always means the use of

insufficient force. For Weinberger, these tests could help us avoid being drawn inexorably into an endless morass that was not vital to our national interest. As a politician, he realized that changing political realities require one to garner and maintain popular support and whole-hearted military commitment to win. Secretary Weinberer provided a policy level guideline that was tantamount to quick, decisive victory.

Decisive Victory and Conflict Termination

Another critical component of decisive victory is the definition of endstate and the concept of conflict termination[39]. Conflict termination helps define winning. The essence of conflict termination is the gaining control of coercive leverage--both political and military--to impose victory and to preclude loss.

Conflict termination and conflict resolution differ in both scope and purpose. The objective of conflict resolution is behavior modification resulting in a permanent resolution suitable to all concerned. It is not possible without the solution to the underlying causes and antagonisms of the conflict. Consequently, conflict resolution signifies a result that, from the perspective of the participants, is

voluntary and lasting. Conflict resolution is a concept of conciliation.

Conflict termination, on the other hand, is the conclusion of disputes through the imposition of the will of one or more participants over others. Unlike conflict resolution, it is not concerned with permanent resolution to the satisfaction of all concerned. Conflict termination occurs when one belligerent achieves his political aims and has the coercive leverage to impose his will on his adversary. Termination denotes a result that does not meet the demands of all concerned; it is accepted for a time because of the unique bargaining power of one of the belligerents.

Conflict termination is an expression of power. Conflict termination short of annihilation of the enemy forces or the occupation of his territory requires the consent of both sides--either formally or tacitly approved. A compromise peace requires the consent of the loser. Conflict, although often used synonymously with war, is broader in scope. War is merely a conflict involving armed hostilities; every war is a conflict but not all conflicts are wars. Conflict termination theory also encompasses limited war, wars

of national liberation, and conflicts that do not involve the clash of conventional forces.

Anatol Rapoport, in his book Fights, Games and Debates, identifies two broad categories of conflicts, "gamelike" and "fightlike" conflicts. The "gamelike" wars adhere to certain rules and allow for a clear winner or loser. These conflicts are much more amenable to projecting outcome and resolutions. War in the Napoleonic era lends itself to this category. In their purest form, "gamelike" conflicts resemble a duel. In contrast, "fightlike" conflicts evoke intense hatred between opponents and defy strategic rationality. The "fightlike" conflict is akin to a brawl, devoid of rules and clear winners and losers. The implicit message for the United States is "avoid 'fightlike' conflicts." Unfortunately, most conflicts in this century are "fightlike," requiring the coercive leverage of conflict termination to achieve an end to hostilities. Decisive victory must rely on a clearly defined end state. That end state is defined in the strategic and operational parameters of conflict termination.

Current Doctrine

All military operations pursue and are governed by political objectives. Today, the translation of success in battle to desired political outcomes is more complicated than ever before. Military success in battle may not alone assure the achievement of national security goals, but defeat will guarantee failure. The United States Army exists to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. It does that by deterring war, and, if deterrence fails, by providing Army forces capable of achieving decisive victory as part of a joint team on the battlefield--anywhere in the world and under virtually any conditions.[40] Decisive victory is defined as US forces that are capable of deploying rapidly, fighting, sustaining themselves, and winning quickly with a minimum of casualties. [41]

FM 100-5, Operations states that in developing this concept, the commander should consider conditions that lead to decisive operations. These operations are key to determining the outcome of engagements, battles, and major operations. Many other operations lead to or support decisive operations.[42]

The British Army is also revising its doctrine. They are grappling with many of the same issues that are addressed in the revised FM 100-5. The definition of defeat is a particularly difficult and elusive notion. The draft version of the British Army's doctrinal manual, Operations, states the following:

> Defeat is defined as the diminished effectiveness of the enemy, to the extent that he is either unable to participate in battle or at least cannot fulfill his intentions. The concept of unconditional surrender is now of limited practical use; outside declared general war it implies a degree of defeat which may overstep public tolerance, exceed the mandate for operations and frustrate conflict resolution. But in reality, circumstances are likely to be less straightforward. We fight to win and winning is definable, given an understanding of our approach to operations.[43]

Success in modern conflict will rarely be defined in exclusively military terms. Put another way, military operations complement political, economic, and diplomatic elements of national power in pursuit of policy objectives. A successful outcome will be the result of the combined effects of those elements. A military commander has to establish how military means will contribute to the desired political ends. His starting point is that the resolution of conflict must serve policy and not be an end in itself.

Success equates to compelling an enemy to conclude a conflict on favorable terms: the conclusion might resolve the conflict to the satisfaction of all parties, or might terminate, in which case the conflict has ended on one side's terms. The commander must bear in mind that the decision to terminate conflict will be taken at the political level and it may occur before he has fully achieved his military objectives.

This notion of graduated political success is important because it has a direct bearing on the two ends to which military operations are directed: the tangible effects on an enemy's physical means of fighting and the intangible effect on his morale in terms of his concession and will to resist.

The destruction of the enemy's physical means of fighting may not in itself lead to success. Success cannot be measured solely in numerical terms. As Basil Liddell Hart said:

> There are ... plenty of negative examples to prove that the conquest of the main armed forces of the enemy is not synonymous with victory. History has no more complete victories than Cannae and Sedan, yet the one failed to bring Hannibal to his goal and the other was only consummated when Paris fell several months later.[14]

If one subscribes to the notion that winning a battle is not always everything, then the Clausewitzian maxim

that "the destruction of the enemy's armed forces is the overriding principle in war"[45] must be revisited in modern context.

Chapter Eight of FM 100-5, Operations, titled "Operations Other Than War," delineates the principles that apply to the broad spectrum of activities that reach beyond the doctrinal limits of war. The manual does note that "some of the same principles apply to both environments [conventional and operations other than war], though modified to accommodate different situations."[46] One principle that bears particular relevance to the discussion of quick, decisive victory is perseverance, defined as preparation for the measured, protracted application of military capability in support of strategic aims.[47]

The manual readily accepts the uncertainty concerning the length of operations in this environment. Paradoxically, FM 100-5 does not disallow decisive military action in operations other than war. It states that "such actions be taken with careful, informed analysis to choose the right time and place for such action."[48] The defining elements of perseverance are the very same components that demand

analysis when seeking quick, decisive victory. Often, as stated in the manual,

> The underlying causes of confrontation and conflict rarely have a clear beginning or a decisive resolution . . . commanders balance their desire to obtain objectives quickly with a sensitivity for the long-term strategic aims and the restraints placed on operations.[49]

Decision makers must envision the means to terminate effectively the conflict on favorable terms. LTC Rampy's paper on conflict termination points out that "conflict termination is the result of a continuous discussion and decision process--a dialectic--between policy decision makers, military strategists, and the theater commander."[50] The ultimate decision to terminate a conflict resides at the political level with the senior military leaders providing advice on the termination of a conflict. Political decision makers must understand that the constraints they impose on the military will shape the military end state. This dialectic produces the conflict termination scheme--the parameters for constructing coercive leverage. Successful implementation of that coercive leverage, through the elements of national power, equals conflict termination.

Establishing the political objective of a conflict is one of the toughest jobs for our civilian national leadership. The military allocates forces, resources, and designs operations to match the political objective. Conflict termination is a tenuous balance between policy, strategy, and operational design. If these three elements are not carefully weighed, the conflict will be more difficult to terminate. The entire process involves the interplay of politics and coercive leverage. The essence of conflict termination implies the ability to control the outcome, and the creation of the coercive leverage required to force a favorable resolution of the conflict.

Conclusions

Quick, decisive victory, first and foremost, is about the American way of war. This paper tracks the evolution of this notion from the Civil War through the Gulf War.

It was during the Civil War that the Union forces, under General Grant, pursued a campaign in which his goal was to annihilate the Confederate armies. Grant realized that no one battle would be decisive, but the sum of various battles would bring ultimate victory. In General Grant's words, "No peace could be had that would be stable and conducive to the happiness of the

people. . .until the military power of the rebellion was entirely broken."[51] Grant's focus was on those forces and resources the South needed to wage war--the armies of Generals Johnston and Lee. Moreover, Grant was capable of envisioning a campaign, rather than a single decisive battle that would ultimately produce victory. The ultimate goal of the Union forces was reunification. This demanded (as a prerequisite) unconditional surrender from the Confederacy. The war was not won quickly, but it did end decisively.

Next, an examination of the US military in World War II highlighted a continued American focus on a strategy of annihilation. The focus, again, lay on the destruction of the enemy armies, but to achieve that end production and population centers became targets. As with the Civil War, World War II ended decisively with total, unconditional surrender of the enemy. The American predilection for annihilation of the enemy through superior firepower was again validated.

The Vietnam conflict presented the American military with an anomalous situation. It was not about defeating a like-minded, like-equipped enemy. It became obvious that, unlike previous conflicts, a strategy of annihilation was somewhat difficult to use when you could not get your enemy to fight a

conventional war. Instead, the military slipped into a strategy of exhaustion, hoping to attrit the enemy through superior firepower over time. It would cost more in resources, but produce fewer American casualties. The US military, despite numerous setbacks, had won all the major engagements. The 1968 Tet Offensive cost the North Vietnamese dearly and virtually wiped out the Viet Cong. But the Vietnam conflict was not another American victory. The war was lost for a host of other reasons. The American people no longer supported the military efforts in Vietnam. The years of watching American servicemen fighting and dying on the nightly news exhausted US popular support long before it exhausted the North Vietnamese.

The years after Vietnam were not easy for the US military. The perceived defeat left an indelible mark on the service members that were there and the policymakers that remembered the political reprocussions. No one wanted another Vietnam. In 1984, Secretary of Defense Weinberger's six major tests for deciding the use of combat forces abroad may well have been the genesis of quick, decisive victory. Weinberger spoke of introducing combat troops "whole heartedly and with the clear intention of winning." The painful reminder of the protracted, fruitless

effort in Vietnam gave a whole new generation of military leaders a clear picture of how not to use military force.

Desert Storm, the successful military campaign to rid Kuwait of the Iraqi invaders, was the high-water mark of the post-Vietnam recovery. The US military would again engage in a strategy of annihilation to defeat the enemy. The military aggressively executed the emerging Airland Battle doctrine. The rapid, resounding defeat of Iraq's war machine was stunning. The American people, fed on a diet of Grenada, Panama, and the Gulf War, have grown to expect quick wins. The expression of this notion is embodied in the doctrinal term quick, decisive victory.

The Final Draft of FM 100-5, Operations, dated January 1993, is the latest expression of the Army's approach to warfighting and other operations. The term decisive victory figures prominently throughout the manual. It is the distillation of the many lessons which history and experience have taught the American people. When you commit US combat troops, give them everything they need to win quickly with few

casualities. This paper concludes with the following two points concerning the viable application of the term decisive victory.

First, at the strategic level, the decisive nature of winning is not the sole domain of the military. In fact, as presented in the section on conflict termination, winning is a function of the complimentary effects of political, economic and diplomatic activities. The end of open conflict becomes the conduit for the use of other elements of national power. More appropriately, it can be said that there was only a decisive "*military*" victory.

Second, the doctrinal treatment in FM 100-5 of the principle of Perseverance most accurately couches decisive victory within the vague parameters of political exigencies. Decisive military action, however, does not equal decisive victory. Decisive action is possible, but only after careful deliberation. Decisive victory can fall outside the responsibility of military intervention and our doctrine must allow for this. Likewise, the military

may well find itself emersed in a crisis that requires the application of military force with the full realization that a quick military solution is not possible. These realizations are clearly anathema to the military and the concept of decisive victory, but perhaps all too realistic in today's uncertain world.

ENDNOTES

[1] Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 100-5: Operations (Final Draft) (Washington, D.C.: GPO, January 1993) 1-7.

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[3] General P. Segur, Comte de, Histoire et Memoires, as quoted by Robert M. Epstein, Course Reading, SAMS, "The Different Levels of War in the Napoleonic Period -- Austerlitz and Friedland", (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: US Army Command and General Staff College, AY89/90), 16.

[4] David G. Chandler, The Campaigns of Napoleon, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1966), 432.

[5] Carl von Clausewitz, On War, trans. and ed. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 258.

[6] Ibid., 617.

[7] Gordon A. Craig, "Delbruck: The Military Historian," Makers of Modern Strategy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 341.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., 342.

[10] Russell F. Weigley, The American Way of War, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), 106.

[11] Ibid., 94.

[12] Ibid., 128.

[13] Ibid., 129.

[14] Ibid., 141.

[15] Ibid., 142.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., 220.

[18] Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 100-5: Operations (Washington D.C.: GPO May, 1941), 97.

[19] Weigley, 359.

[20] Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr., The Army and Vietnam (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1886),91.

[21] Ibid., 93.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid., 97.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., 148.

[27] Ibid., 164.

[28] Ibid., 165.

[29] Ibid., 166.

[30] James Blackwell, Thunder in the Desert (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 212.

[31] Transcript of "Begining the Air Campaign,"By President George Bush, Military Review, No 9, Sept 1991, 83.

[32] Blackwell, 147.

[33] Editors of "US News and World Report," Triumph without Victory (New York: Times Books, 1992), 403.

[34] Ibid., 413.

[35] Ibid., 10.

[36] Casper W. Weinberger, "The Uses of Military Power," Defense 85, (Jan 85): 3.

[37] Ibid., 6.

[38] Ibid., 9.

[39] The following references to conflict termination and post-conflict resolution are drawn from a document by LTC Michael Rampy, "Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Activities," unpublished paper, School of Advanced Military Studies, Ft. Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and General Staff College, 11 Jan 1992. The majority of LTC Rampy's work was subsequently published. See "The Endgame: Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Activities." Military Review No 10, Oct 1993, 42-54.

[40] Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 100-5: Operations (Final Draft) (Washington, D. C.: GPO, January, 1993) 1-1.

[41] Ibid., 1-7.

[42] Ibid., 7-9.

[43] Draft Document, British Army's version of Operations, not dated.

[44] Ibid., 2-2.

[45] Clausewitz, 258.

[46] FM 100-5, Operations (Final Draft), 8-1.

[47] Ibid., 8-6.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Rampy, 12.

[51] Ulyses S. Grant, "Report of Lieut. Gen. Ulysses S. Grnt, US Army commanding Armies of the United States, including operations March, 1864 -May 1865." in "The Proffesional Soldier and the Study of History. Dwight D. Eisenhower. Richard M. Swain, (ed.) (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: The Command And General Staff College, 1990), 27.

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