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**JOINT FORCES STAFF COLLEGE  
JOINT ADVANCED WARFIGHTING SCHOOL**



**A DECISIVE POINT IN THE WAR ON TERRORISM**

**By**

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in partial satisfaction of the requirements of a Master of Science Degree in Joint Campaign Planning and Strategy**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Joint Forces Staff College or the Department of Defense.**

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**ABSTRACT**

Joint doctrine can better frame the critical factor of human dimension and the element of time in the joint operation planning process. Both are central in the War on Terrorism. To frame the discussion, the study examines the strategic aspect of culture and then considers the human terrain in military planning. The research reviews various narratives for the current strategic environment. The paper then examines the current transnational terrorist threat, its ideology, its goals, and its operational reach. The study then reviews current joint doctrine with a specific focus on how it frames the operational environment and how it employs time in the operational design process. It examines the AirLand Battle doctrine for its applicability to the War on Terrorism. Changes to the joint operational environment and operational design models are recommended. This paper considers a decisive point the United States must control or influence in the War on Terrorism.

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## Introduction

As the United States enters the sixth year of the War on Terror, it is developing a better sense of the current *adversary*, the nature of this war and the true operational environment.<sup>1</sup> Most notable is the growing recognition that the *key terrain* in this fight exists not necessarily on the physical battlefields of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Philippines but primarily within the human dimension.<sup>2</sup>

*The National Security Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, dated September 2006, highlights the critical battle in this war:

In the long run, winning the War on Terror means winning the battle of ideas. Ideas can transform the embittered and disillusioned either into murderers willing to kill innocents, or into free peoples living harmoniously in a diverse society.<sup>3</sup>

In his book, *On War*, Carl Von Clausewitz offered the following genealogy for war:

“Politics, moreover, is the womb in which war develops - where its outlines already exist in their hidden rudimentary form, like the characteristics of living creatures in their embryos.”<sup>4</sup> The vision articulated in *The National Security Strategy for Combating Terrorism* requires winning not only the close battles of Iraq and Afghanistan, but winning as well the deep battle, the multi-decade battle, to influence the politics of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Adversary* - “America is at war with a transnational terrorist threat fueled by a radical ideology of hatred, oppression, and murder.” President George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, September 2006): 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Key Terrain* - “Any locality, or area, the seizure or retention of which affords a marked advantage to either combatant.” DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, accessed at [www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict) on 05 November 2006.

<sup>3</sup> “From the beginning, the War on Terror has been both a battle of arms and a battle of ideas - a fight against the terrorists and their murderous ideology. In the short run, the fight involves the application of all instruments of national power and influence to kill or capture the terrorists; deny them safe haven and control of any nation; to prevent them from gaining access to WMD; render potential terrorist targets less attractive by strengthening security; and cut off their sources of funding and other resources they need to operate and survive.” President George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, Trans. Michael Howard & Peter Paret (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993): 173.

*next generation* of transnational terrorists.<sup>5</sup> The War on Terrorism presents the United States with several challenges, one of which is the integration and synchronization between the battle of arms and the battle of ideas. It is a challenge that the United States faced during the Cold War.

The 1973 Arab-Israeli War illustrated the power of the Soviet Union's operational concept of large, highly synchronized armor formation set to time and "served as a wake-up call for the US Army."<sup>6</sup> The result was the AirLand Battle doctrine.<sup>7</sup> A critical component of this doctrine was the concept of the deep attack against second echelon Soviet forces to regain the initiative.<sup>8</sup> Today's strategic situation calls for a similar review of doctrine.

### **Thesis Statement**

Joint doctrine must include the critical elements of the human dimension and time in the joint operation planning process (JOPP).<sup>9</sup> This line of inquiry has its roots in *The National Security Strategy for Combating Terrorism* as it recognizes that a winning

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<sup>5</sup> *Next Generation* - "To better prepare ourselves for a generational struggle against terrorism and the extremist ideologies fueling it, we will create an expert community of counterterrorism professionals." President George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 21.

<sup>6</sup> Harold R. Winton, "Partnership and Tension: The Army and Air Force Between Vietnam and Desert Shield," *Parameters* (Spring, 1996): 102.

<sup>7</sup> "The AirLand Battle dealt with the Army's major and most serious challenge - armored, mechanized, combined arms battle. The new concept projected an explicitly offensive emphasis and had as its distinguishing feature an extended view of the modern battlefield - extended in both distance and time. The extended battlefield added emphasis on integrated attack by land and air forces and provided options embracing the tactical nuclear and chemical dimensions of modern war." John L. Romjue, "The Evolution of the Airland Battle Concept," *Air University Review* (May-June 1984): 5.

<sup>8</sup> General (Ret) Donn A. Starry, "Extending the Battlefield," *Military Review* (March 1981): 34.

<sup>9</sup> "JOPP is an orderly, analytical planning process, which consists of a set of logical steps to analyze a mission, develop, analyze and compare alternative courses of action (COA), select the best COA, and produce a plan or order." Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 26 December): xiii.

strategy in this war must move beyond the physical space in the “battle of arms” and must focus, instead, on the human aspects in the “battle of ideas.”<sup>10</sup>

## Methodology

The research method for this study consists of:

- Literature review of the growing discussion of the importance of culture and the *human terrain* of a given area.<sup>11</sup>
- Review of the considerations of the elements of national and transnational power.
- Historical review of the human factor in warfare.
- Review of various narratives for the current strategic environment.
- Examination of the *current adversary* with emphasis on his *depth* and *operational reach*.<sup>12</sup>
- Review of the United States strategy for the War on Terrorism.
- Analysis of current joint doctrine for its consideration of the human dimension and its treatment of time.
- Review of the AirLand Battle doctrine for its potential relevance to the War on Terrorism.

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<sup>10</sup> “In the long run, winning the War on Terror means winning the battle of ideas.” President George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Human Terrain* - The term is increasingly used in academic and military circles to describe the human dimension of a given operational area. The author provides a detailed definition of the term on page fifteen of the paper.

<sup>12</sup> *Current Adversary* - The study employs the definition of the adversary presented in the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*. “America is at war with a transnational terrorist threat fueled by a radical ideology of hatred, oppression, and murder.” President George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 1.

*Depth* - “Depth applies to time as well as geography. Operations extended in depth shape future conditions and can disrupt an opponent’s decision cycle.” Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*, IV-24.

- Recommendations to the joint models for the *operational environment* and the *operational design*.<sup>13</sup>
- Consideration of a *decisive point* in the War on Terrorism.<sup>14</sup>

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*Operational Reach* - “Operational reach is the distance and duration across which a unit can successfully employ military capabilities.” Ibid., IV-23.

<sup>13</sup> *Operational Environment* - “Operational environment is the composite of the conditions, circumstances and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander.” Ibid., xv.

*Operational Design* - “Operational design is the conception and construction of the framework that underpins a joint operation plan and its subsequent execution.” Ibid., xvii.

## The Application of Culture

There is no mode of warfare, conducted in any geographic environment, wherein the enemy's strategic culture of is no importance.<sup>15</sup>

### **Definitions of Culture**

This study provides definitions of culture to highlight the numerous and variety of the factors that comprise this phenomenon. The study accepts these definitions without providing any additional qualifiers. The study is more concerned with concept of culture and its affect on warfare. Increasingly, culture and the term "human terrain" are employed in the same context. The study will define human terrain in the next chapter.

Merriam-Webster defines culture as "The set of values, conventions, or social practices associated with a particular field, activity, or societal characteristic."<sup>16</sup> It further defines culture as "the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations, the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group and the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution or organization."<sup>17</sup>

In his article, "Principles for the Savage Wars of Peace," Frank G. Hoffman defines culture in the following way:

The combination of national history, myth, geography, beliefs, ethnic backgrounds and religion we know as culture. Culture is the totality of the socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and thought characteristic of a community or population. Culture is the complex aggregate

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<sup>14</sup> *Decisive Point* - "A geographic place, specific key event, critical factor, or function that, when acted upon, allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an adversary or contribute materially to achieving success." Ibid., IV-16.

<sup>15</sup> Colin S. Gray, "Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt?" *Strategic Studies Institute* (March 2006): 34.

<sup>16</sup> Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, accessed at [www.m-w/dictionary/culture](http://www.m-w/dictionary/culture) on 11 Dec 06.

<sup>17</sup> Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, accessed at [www.m-w/dictionary/culture](http://www.m-w/dictionary/culture) on 11 Dec 06.

that includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by a member of a society.<sup>18</sup>

These definitions highlight the many potential drivers of culture as well as the potential levels, tactical, operational and strategic, that it could affect.

### **Growing Importance of Culture and the Human Terrain**

Since 11 September 2001, a surge in policy statements and articles has emphasized the military significance of culture, specifically, that of ourselves, our allies, our coalition partners, and our adversaries and their supporters. A few of these documents will be considered to illustrate the range of the current examination of this factor in the conduct of war.

In his article, “Culture-Centric Warfare,” Major General (Ret) Robert H. Scales Jr., offers the following insight:

Transformation has been interpreted as exclusively technological, but against an enemy who fights unconventionally .... it is more important to understand motivation, intent, method, and culture than to have a few more meters of precision, knots of speed, or bits of bandwidth.<sup>19</sup>

In her article, “The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture,” Montgomery McFate offers the following warning:

The changing nature of warfare requires a deeper understanding of adversary culture. The more unconventional the adversary, and further from Western cultural norms, the more we need to understand the society and underlying cultural dynamics.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Frank G. Hoffman, “Principles for the Savage Wars of Peace” in *Rethinking the Principles of War*, ed. Anthony D. McIvor, et al (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005): 303.

<sup>19</sup> Major General (Ret) Robert H. Scales, Jr., “Culture-Centric Warfare,” *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, Volume 130, issue 10 (October 2004): 32.

<sup>20</sup> Montgomery McFate, “The Military Utility of Understanding Adversary Culture,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, issue 38 (3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2005): 48.

McFate follows this line of thought in a subsequent article for *Military Review* entitled “An Organizational Solution for DOD’s Cultural Knowledge Needs.” In it she writes,

DOD should create and house an organization of social scientists having strong connections to the services and combatant commands. The organization should act as a clearinghouse for ethnographic field research, provide reachback to combatant commanders, design and conduct cultural training; and disseminate knowledge to the field in a useable form.<sup>21</sup>

The article, “The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” expands the organizational suggestion of Montgomery McFate and offers a model for a new military capability, the *Human Terrain Team*, to aid commanders in navigating the cultural aspects of the operational environment.<sup>22</sup> This article argues that, “It is glaringly apparent that commanders need a culturally oriented counterpart to tactical intelligence systems to provide them with a similarly detailed, similarly comprehensive cultural picture of their areas of operations.”<sup>23</sup>

The *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, from February 6, 2006, notes that, “Developing broader linguistic capability and cultural understanding is also critical to prevail in the long war and to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges.”<sup>24</sup>

Max Boot notes in his article, “Navigating the ‘Human Terrain,’” that, “We need smart people, not smart bombs - Americans who are familiar with foreign languages and cultures and proficient in such disciplines as intelligence collection and collection.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Montgomery McFate and Andrea Jackson, “An Organizational Solution for DOD’s Cultural Knowledge Needs,” *Military Review* (July-August 2005): 20.

<sup>22</sup> *Human Terrain Team* - “Teams will consist of five members: a leader, a cultural analyst, a regional studies analyst, a human terrain research manager, and a human terrain analyst.” Jacob Kipp, Lester Grau, Karl Prinslow and Captain Don Smith, “The Human Terrain System: A CORDS for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” *Military Review* (September-October 2006). 12.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>24</sup> Secretary of Defense, Donald H. Rumsfeld, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 6 February 2006): 78.

<sup>25</sup> Max Boot, “Navigating the ‘Human Terrain,’” *The Los Angeles Times* (December 7, 2005): 1, accessed at [www.cfr.org/publication](http://www.cfr.org/publication) on 06 December 2006.

The article, “The MiTT and Its ‘Human Terrain’,” highlights the tactical significance of the human terrain when it points out, “Transitioning Iraqi units into the lead can be very fulfilling. Your first step is to embrace the human terrain in your Iraqi AO.”<sup>26</sup>

John W. Jandora notes, in his article, “Center of Gravity and Asymmetric Conflict - Factoring in Culture,” that “the U.S. military must prepare to factor culture into mission planning at tactical, operational and strategic levels.”<sup>27</sup>

In his book, *The Battle for Peace*, General (Ret) Anthony Zinni offers the following insight for the current environment: “If you want to change a society or influence its direction and choices, you must do it with an understanding of its culture, within the context of its culture, and with an understanding of the plight of its people.”<sup>28</sup> For General (Ret) Zinni, a level of “cultural intelligence” for a given area was “a necessary ingredient for planning the numerous interventions we undertook, yet it always seemed missing.”<sup>29</sup>

The new U.S. Army field manual, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, from December 2006, states, “to evaluate the people, the following six socio-cultural factors should be analyzed: Society, Social Structure, Culture, Language, Power and Authority and Interests.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Richard A. McConnel, Major Christopher L. Matson and Captain Brent A. Clemmer, “The MiTT and Its ‘Human Terrain’,” *Field Artillery Magazine* (January-February 2007). 14.

<sup>27</sup> John W. Jandora, “Center of Gravity and Asymmetric Conflict, Factoring in Culture,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, issue 39 (4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2005): 83.

<sup>28</sup> General (Ret) Anthony Zinni, *The Battle for Peace*, (New York, Palgrave MacMillian, 2006): 22.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>30</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-24, Counterinsurgency* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, December 2006): 3-4.

It is important to note that informed consideration of culture and human terrain is important but it will not guarantee success in the War on Terrorism. In his article, “Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt?,” Colin S. Gray offers the following caution:

The problem lies with the iconic adoption of culture as *the* answer. It is not. Recognition of the importance of culture is a part of the answer to the question of how to be effective in war against irregular (and regular!) enemies. But culture is a difficult concept to define and grasp. Even if grasped, it is extremely difficult to deal with or function in an alien culture of marked variance from one’s own.<sup>31</sup>

In summary, there is increased examination of the factor of culture and its relationship to human element in war. This ranges from the discussion of the tactical application of culture for units tasked with training Iraqi forces, to considerations of new military units, human terrain teams, to provide a cultural assessment of a given area to a commander. Clearly, there is a need for a greater examination of the strategic application of this factor as a natural outgrowth of a war that depends on winning the battle of ideas in several cultures. Senior decision-makers and strategists must be able to factor this element into the plan. However, Colin S. Gray’s cautionary note speaks to the wholesale acceptance of culture as a solution for success in war.

### **Changes in Factoring the Elements of Power**

Since 11 September 2001, there have been additions to components of national power. The DIME (Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic) model was a long-standing paradigm for defining national power. In his address to a Joint Session of Congress on September 20, 2001, President Bush stressed the importance of targeting

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<sup>31</sup> Colin S. Gray, “Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt?,” 12. Italics are original.

terrorist finances and preventing terrorists from abusing the legal freedoms.<sup>32</sup> The *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*, dated February 2006, introduced additional considerations by including the financial, intelligence and law enforcement elements in the calculus of power.<sup>33</sup>

It is interesting to note that the DIME and DIMEFIL models do not include culture as a consideration in the description of national power. Montgomery McFate highlights this point in her article, *Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of their Curious Relationship*. She observes the following:

Countering the insurgency in Iraq requires cultural and social knowledge of the adversary. Yet, none of the elements of U.S. national power - diplomatic, military, intelligence, or economic - explicitly take adversary culture into account in the formation or execution of policy. This cultural knowledge gap has a simple cause - the almost total absence of anthropology within the national security establishment.<sup>34</sup>

It is important to compare the DIME and DIMEFIL models with the joint model for the operational environment. The joint or PMESII model consists of six systems (political, military, economic, social, informational, infrastructure, legal, and others) to define the environment.<sup>35</sup> Interestingly, joint doctrine acknowledges the element of

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<sup>32</sup> *Finances* - "They use ostensibly charitable organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for funding and recruitment." President George W. Bush, *Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People*, September 20, 2001. 7, accessed at [www.white-house.gov/news/releases/2003/02/counter-terrorism/threat](http://www.white-house.gov/news/releases/2003/02/counter-terrorism/threat) on 18 November 2006.

*Legal Freedoms* - "In addition to finding sanctuary within the boundaries of a state sponsor, terrorists often seek out states where they can operate with impunity because the central government is unable to stop them." *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>33</sup> *DIMEFIL Model* - "Success in this war will rely heavily on the close cooperation among U.S. Government agencies and partner nations to integrate all instruments of U.S. and partner national power - diplomatic, information, military, economic, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement (DIMEFIL)." Secretary of Defense, Donald H. Rumsfeld, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1 February 2006): 6.

<sup>34</sup> Montgomery McFate, "Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of their Curious Relationship," *Military Review* (March-April 2005): 2, accessed at [www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume3/august\\_2005/7\\_05\\_2.html](http://www.army.mil/professionalwriting/volumes/volume3/august_2005/7_05_2.html) on 19 November 2006.

<sup>35</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*, xv.

culture but not currently as a system. *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations*, states: “The operational environment includes a wide variety of intangible factors such as the culture, perceptions, beliefs, and values of an adversary, neutral, or friendly political and social systems.”<sup>36</sup>

In summary, the long-standing DIME model for defining national power has expanded to include the elements of finances, intelligence and law enforcement. Currently, the DIMEFIL model does not consider culture as an element of national power although joint doctrine does informally consider it in its appreciation of the operational environment.

### **Potential Strategic Implications**

The strategic implication of culture is potentially a very significant issue in the War on Terrorism. One reason, as Montgomery McFate notes, is that the United States no longer enjoys the luxury of cultural neutrality as did during the Cold War.

In a conflict between symmetric adversaries, where both are evenly matched and using similar technology, understanding the adversary’s culture is largely irrelevant. The Cold War, for all its complexity, pitted two powers of European heritage against each other. In a counterinsurgency operation against a non-Western adversary, however, culture matters.<sup>37</sup>

Anthony H. Cordesman amplifies this theme in his article, “Preliminary ‘Lessons’ of the Israeli-Hezbollah War.” He notes the challenge of conducting a war across cultural boundaries:

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<sup>36</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 17 September 2006): II-24.

<sup>37</sup> Montgomery McFate, “Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of their Curious Relationship,” 2.

Civilians become cultural, religious, and ideological weapons when the US is attacking different cultures. The gap between the attacker and the attacked is so great that no amount of explanation and reparations can compensate.<sup>38</sup>

Another reason for its significance is that the potential strategic implication of religion cannot be denied, for either the United States or its adversary. In his article, “God’s Country,” Walter Russell Mead offers the following insight:

Religion has always been a major force in the U.S. politics, policy, identity and culture. Religion shapes the nation’s character, helps form Americans’ ideas about the world, and influences the ways Americans respond to events beyond their borders.<sup>39</sup>

Colonel (Ret) Joseph D. Celeski, in his article, “Strategic Aspects of Counterinsurgency,” offers an equally sobering assessment of the potential power of religion in this War:

Religion has become an element of national power, and modern insurgents use it quite effectively as a façade behind which to hide criminal enterprises and brutal power struggles. Even so, when analyzing the will of the insurgents, we must acknowledge that ideology might provide them a built-in will that could outlast that of counterinsurgent forces.<sup>40</sup>

In summary, the War on Terrorism represents a completely different cultural environment for the United States. It is clearly a different cultural context than the Cold War. The adversary clearly leverages religion to increase his operational power.

### **Curious Firewall**

It is interesting to note the discussion of culture in the *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* as it appears to establish a firewall in this area. It states, “It is not a religious or cultural clash between Islam and the West, although our extremist enemies find it useful to characterize the war that way.”<sup>41</sup> In the same document, the

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<sup>38</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, “Preliminary “Lessons” of the Israeli-Hezbollah War” (Washington D.C.: *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 21 August 2006): 11.

<sup>39</sup> Walter Russell Mead, “God’s Country,” *Foreign Affairs* (September / October 2006): 24.

<sup>40</sup> Colonel (Ret) Joseph D. Celeski, Joseph, “Strategic Aspects of Counterinsurgency,” *Military Review* (March-April 2006): 37.

<sup>41</sup> Secretary of Defense, Donald H. Rumsfeld, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*, 4.

adversary is described as “a transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks, and individuals - and their state and non-state supporters - which have in common that they exploit Islam and use terrorism for ideological ends.”<sup>42</sup> This description implicitly acknowledges cultural implications of the War on Terrorism as it refers to the exploitation of religion to build an ideology.

In summary, since 11 September 2001 and the start of the War on Terrorism, there has been a greater examination of culture as a planning factor. The DIMEFIL model includes three additional elements of power. Still, culture is not currently included as an element of national power. The joint model for the operational environment includes two categories, social and political, that tangentially address the element of culture. In a long war, the success of which depends on winning the battle of ideas, it seems appropriate to include culture as an important consideration when assessing the power of any adversary.

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<sup>42</sup> Secretary of Defense, Donald H. Rumsfeld, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*, 4.

## The Concept of Human Terrain

A careful and unbiased assessment of demography, social structures and values, economic trends, the political culture, and the structure and performance of the political system is, as we have seen, necessary to uncover the causes of an insurgency and identify obstacles facing both sides in implementing their strategies and policies.<sup>43</sup>

### **Types of Terrain**

Several terms require definition before proceeding further. The study provides definitions for terrain, key terrain, human terrain and key human terrain. Critical to the paper are the terms human terrain and key human terrain. Both are essential to building a new construct for the operational environment. The paper prefers the term “human terrain” to the term “culture” in capturing the human dimension of a given operational area. Additionally, the term human terrain, as the progression of the definitions below will attempt to show, follows a doctrinal line of thought. The paper is not attempting to provide an authoritative definition for the term, human terrain, because the contributing factors will expand or contract depending on the perspective and level of application. Instead, the study is attempting to illustrate the concept of human terrain and its relevance to joint operation planning similar to the study of physical terrain.<sup>44</sup>

*Terrain.* “A geographic area. A piece of land. The physical features of a tract of land.”<sup>45</sup>

*Key Terrain.* “Any locality, or area, the seizure or retention of which affords a marked advantage to either combatant.”<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Bard E. O’Neil, *Insurgency & Terrorism, From Revolution to Apocalypse*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Dulles, Potomac Books, 2005): 166.

<sup>44</sup> *Terrain Study* - “An analysis and interpretation of natural and manmade features of an area, their effects on military operations, and the effect of weather and time on these features.” DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, accessed at [www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/on05November2006](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/on05November2006).

<sup>45</sup> *Terrain* - Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, accessed at [www.m-w/dictionary/terrain](http://www.m-w/dictionary/terrain) on 05 November 2006.

<sup>46</sup> *Key Terrain* - This is a doctrinal term. DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, accessed at [www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/on05November2006](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/doddict/on05November2006).

*Human Terrain.* Refers to the anthropological, historical, psychological, informational, geographic, religious, ethnic, temporal, political and other factors affecting the population within a given area.<sup>47</sup>

*Key Human Terrain.* Refers to the area within the human terrain where the seizure or retention affords a marked advantage to the owner.<sup>48</sup>

## **Historical Review of Human Terrain**

This section examines discussions of human terrain from the viewpoint of several military theorists: Sun Tzu, Carl Von Clausewitz, and Colonel (Ret) John Warden III.

These theorists span the ancient, classical and contemporary eras. Although, not attempting to place the work of Colonel (Ret) Warden on the same level as Sun Tzu and Clausewitz, his work is particularly important in understanding the intellectual underpinnings of the current systems analysis approach. The framework for viewing the joint operational environment borrows from Warden's "systems approach to warfare."<sup>49</sup>

It is important to understand the historical context of Sun Tzu and Clausewitz when employing these theorists in a contemporary argument. For both these theorists, the additional filter of language translation must be considered.

### **Sun Tzu**

Sun Tzu would clearly champion the strategic aspect of "culture." His admonition to "Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never

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<sup>47</sup> *Human Terrain* - This is not a doctrinal term. The term is increasingly used in academic and military circles to describe the human dimension of a given operational area. The originator of the term is unknown to the author. The author first heard the term several years ago in the Special Forces community. The author offers the above list of factors as a working definition for terms recognizing that it is not a comprehensive list of the human dimension. The author concurs with the anthropological argument put forth by Montgomery McFate.

<sup>48</sup> *Key Human Terrain.* This is not a doctrinal term. The author offers this term as a natural progression in the sequence, terrain - key terrain and human terrain - key human terrain. The author cannot confirm if this term already exists in the contemporary lexicon.

<sup>49</sup> Milan Vego, "Systems Approach to Center of Gravity," *Campaigning* (Fall 2006): 14.

be in peril” speaks to the imperative of understanding cultures, both yours and that of the enemy, and their direct effect on military operations.<sup>50</sup> He continues this theme with a qualifier; “When you are ignorant of the enemy but know yourself, your chances of winning or losing are equal. If ignorant both of your enemy and of yourself, you are certain in every battle to be in peril.”<sup>51</sup>

Operational knowledge of the enemy was critically important to Sun Tzu’s overall concept of war. As he phrased it, “What is called ‘foreknowledge’ cannot be elicited from spirits, nor from gods, nor by analogy with past events, nor from calculations. It must be obtained from men who know the enemy situation.”<sup>52</sup> Most telling is Sun Tzu’s rejection of “calculations” of the enemy vice real knowledge of the enemy. Better knowledge of the enemy is gained through the use of secret agents.<sup>53</sup>

Sun Tzu advises practitioners of the military art to assess the preparations for war in terms of “five fundamental factors” consisting of moral influence, weather, terrain, command and doctrine.<sup>54</sup> His description of terrain is insightful: “Ground may be classified according to its nature as accessible, entrapping, indecisive, constricted, precipitous, and distant.”<sup>55</sup> Sun Tzu describes “accessible” terrain, as “Ground which both we and the enemy can traverse with equal ease is called accessible. In such ground, he who first takes high sunny positions convenient to his supply routes can fight

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<sup>50</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Trans. Samuel B. Griffith (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971): 84.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>53</sup> “Now there are five sorts of secret agents to be employed. These are native, inside, doubled, expendable, and, living.” *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

advantageously.”<sup>56</sup> The “sunny position” in the human terrain will be examined later in this paper.

### Clausewitz

Clausewitz’s seminal work, *On War*, provides a fertile ground for harvesting supporting points for almost any argument concerning the military arts. Initial books, which are now considered chapters, of *On War*, suggest Clausewitz placed greater emphasis on the physical side of the military equation vice the moral and human aspects. However, in the later books of *On War*, written long after the initial books, he appears to reconsider the balance between the physical and moral aspect of the enemy.

In Book One, Clausewitz establishes a clear objective for war. As he wrote, “War is not merely an act of policy but a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on by other means.”<sup>57</sup> For Clausewitz, physical force is the currency of war: “Force - that is, physical force, for moral force has no existence save as expressed in the state and the law - is thus the *means* of war, to impose our will on the enemy is its *object*.”<sup>58</sup> His end state is the following:

The fighting forces must be *destroyed*: that is, they must be *put in a condition that they can no longer carry on the fight*. Whenever we use the phrase ‘destruction of the enemy’s forces’ this alone is what we mean. The country must be occupied; otherwise, the enemy could raise fresh military forces.<sup>59</sup>

It can be argued that Clausewitz’s early emphasis on physical battles could be potentially at odds with his overarching thesis that war is “a true political instrument, a continuation of political intercourse, carried on by other means.”<sup>60</sup> His basic formulation

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<sup>56</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, 124.

<sup>57</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 99.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, *On War*, 83. Italics are original.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 102. Italics are original.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

would suggest that war could be waged in both a physical and informational context as long as “political intercourse” achieves the desired objective of political submission.<sup>61</sup>

Clausewitz offers varying views on the importance of the human dimension in the operational environment. Clausewitz presents the concept of a “paradoxical trinity” in war.<sup>62</sup> He describes it as follows:

The first of these three aspects mainly concerns the people; the commander and his army; the third the government. The passions that are to be kindled in war must already be inherent in the people; the scope of which the play of courage and talent will enjoy in the realm of probability and chance depends on the particular character of the commander and the army; but the political aims are the business of government alone.<sup>63</sup>

Clausewitz clearly recognized that the power generated from the populace. However, in a brief section entitled *Factors That Affect The Application Of The Means*, Clausewitz does not expand the earlier line of thought. He simply states:

The factors are the geographical surroundings and nature of the terrain (former extended to include the country and the people of the entire theater of war); the time of day (including the time of year); and the weather (particularly unusual occurrences such as severe frost, and so forth).<sup>64</sup>

It appears, from these passages, that Clausewitz saw the role of the people in supporting role vice having a specific operational application.

## **Warden**

The work of Colonel (Ret) John A. Warden III offers conflicting views on the relative value of human dimension in war. His book, *The Air Campaign*, published originally in 1988 and updated in 2000, contains portions that are very sympathetic to the

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<sup>61</sup> “War is thus an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will.” Ibid., 83.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 165.

importance of the human terrain in military planning and harken back to the work of Sun

Tzu. He posits:

Military objectives and campaign plans must be tied to political objectives *as seen through the enemy's eyes, not one's own*. Failure to follow this cardinal precept has led state after state down the primrose path to embarrassment, or defeat.<sup>65</sup>

He provides an interesting caveat for the current irregular warfare environment. He

states: “The nature of the enemy is quite important, especially if the air campaign

envisions anything other than straight attrition.”<sup>66</sup>

Colonel (Ret) Warden takes a different approach in his article entitled, “The Enemy as a System,” written for *Air Power Journal* in 1995. He puts forth the following equation.

$$\text{(Physical)} \times \text{(Morale)} = \text{Outcome}^{67}$$

He provides the following amplification to the equation.

If the physical side of the equation can be driven close to zero, the best morale in the world is not going to produce a high number on the outcome side of the equation. Looking at this equation, we are struck by the fact that the physical side of the enemy is, in theory, perfectly knowledgeable and predictable.<sup>68</sup>

He further qualifies his assessment.

Conversely, the morale side, the human side, is beyond the realm of the predictable in a particular situation because human beings are so different from each other. Our war efforts, therefore, should be directed primarily at the physical side.<sup>69</sup>

In summary, Sun Tzu's writings appear most consistently supportive of recognizing the importance of the human terrain in warfare. Clausewitz's description of

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<sup>65</sup> Colonel (Ret) John A. Warden, *The Air Campaign* (Lincoln: toExcel Press, 2000): 111. Italics are original.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>67</sup> Colonel (Ret) John A. Warden, “The Enemy as a System,” *Air Power Journal* (Spring 1995): 388.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 388.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 389.

politics as an incubator of war, as “the womb in which war develops” is particularly useful as it challenges military planners to consider the potential ideological elements that form the politics of a given people.<sup>70</sup> Colonel (Ret) Warden’s work highlights the challenges when factoring the “human side” into targeting process.

### **Human Terrain - Recognizing Its Operational Power**

Recognizing the power within the human terrain, that is the effect it can achieve militarily is essential in a war which is a “different kind of war”.<sup>71</sup> Colonel (Ret) Warden’s equation (Physical x Morale = Outcome) acknowledges the power within the human terrain. In his article, “The Counterrevolution in Military Affairs,” Ralph Peters provides a contemporary example of this phenomenon. He notes the following:

Not a single item in our trillion-dollar arsenal can compare with the genius of the suicide bomber - the breakthrough weapon of our time. Our intelligence systems cannot locate him, our arsenal cannot deter him, and all too often, our soldiers cannot stop him before it is too late. A man of invincible conviction - call it delusion, if you will - armed with explosives stolen or purchased for a handful of stolen bills can have a strategic impact that staggers governments. Abetted by the global media, the suicide bomber is a wonder weapon of the age.<sup>72</sup>

The suicide bomber, particularly when his actions are aggregated with others as occurred on 11 September 2001, clearly demonstrates the operational power within the human terrain.

### **Human Terrain - Challenges of Assessing Its Operational Power**

There are several challenges to assessing the operational power of the human terrain of the transnational terrorist movement vice the infrastructure of a traditional

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<sup>70</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 173.

<sup>71</sup> “Our strategy also recognizes that the War on Terror is a different kind of war. From the beginning, it has been both a battle of arms and a battle of ideas.” President George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 1.

<sup>72</sup> Ralph Peters, “The Counterrevolution in Military Affairs.” *The Weekly Standard* (6 February 2006): 19.

nation-state opponent. The first challenge involves the simple observation and assessment of power. The *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations, Version 2.0* characterizes a traditional nation-state opponent in the following manner: “The traditional opponent is a state actor who will employ well-recognized forms of military force on force to challenge our power as well as that of our partners.”<sup>73</sup> A “traditional opponent” derives the bulk of its operational power from instruments of power that are generally observable and measurable.

The transnational terrorist movement is an irregular opponent. The *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations, Version 2.0* defines an irregular opponent as “typically a state, or nonstate, actor who aims to erode our influence, patience and will by adopting unconventional methods in the face of overmatching US conventional capabilities.”<sup>74</sup> An irregular opponent rarely presents the “well recognized forms of military force” like a traditional opponent.<sup>75</sup> He derives the bulk of his operational power from intangibles such as politics, religion and ideology, which are difficult to observe and to assess. The *Commander’s Handbook for an Effects Based Approach to Joint Operations*, from the Joint Forces Command, provides the following caveat:

It essential to understand that some systems - particularly those involving economic, political and social interaction - are dominated by humans, can adapt readily to actual or anticipated actions, and are not open to observation as more static systems such as infrastructure.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations, Version 2.0* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, August 2005): 7.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>76</sup> U.S. Joint Forces Command, *Commander’s Handbook for an Effect Based Approach to Joint Operations* (Suffolk, VA.: Joint Warfighter Center, 24 February 2006): I-2.

The second challenge to assessing the operational power of the human terrain involves the lens of culture. In his article, “Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy,” Colin S. Gray notes the following:

Culture is crucial, both ours and theirs. “Theirs” for the obvious reason just outlined; restated, the local people decide who wins. “Ours” because we can approach and seek to understand other cultures only through the inevitably distorting prism of our own.<sup>77</sup>

Gray lists thirteen characteristics of the American way of war, one of which involves being “culturally-challenged.”<sup>78</sup> He notes, “From the Indian Wars on the internal frontier, to Iraq and Afghanistan today, the American way of war has suffered from the self-inflicted damage growing out of a failure to understand the enemy of the day.”<sup>79</sup> The potential for cultural obstacles is great.

The third challenge of assessing the operational power of the human terrain involves the structural orientation of U.S. military forces. Colin S. Gray makes the following observation:

American soldiers have been overwhelmingly regular in their view of, approach to, and skill in, warfare. They have prepared near exclusively for “real war,” which is to say combat against a tolerably, symmetrical, regular enemy.<sup>80</sup>

Gray’s observation is consistent with the *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* dated 2006.

In summary, it is critical that the U.S. appreciates, as did Sun Tzu, the human terrain in warfare, both of its adversary and of itself. This is true for two reasons. One,

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<sup>77</sup> Colin S. Gray, “Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt?” 25.

<sup>78</sup> “Apolitical, Astrategic, Ahistorical, Problem-Solving and Optimistic, Culturally Challenged, Technology Dependent, Focused on Firepower, Large-Scale, Aggressive and Offensive, Profoundly Regular, Impatient, Logistically Excellent, and Highly Sensitive to Casualties.” *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

the United States is engaged in a war where, despite its best efforts to avoid the discussion of intangibles like religion, the adversary freely leverages this inspirational element of the human terrain. Anthony H. Cordesman highlights the challenge of not accepting this reality.

Modern nations must learn to fight regional, cultural, and global battles to shape the political, perceptual, ideological, and media dimensions of war within the terms that other nations and cultures can understand, or they risk losing every advantage their military victories gain.<sup>81</sup>

Two, the United States is engaged in a war that is temperamentally and structurally in direct contrast to the preferred American way of war. Sun Tzu's caution to know one's self and to know one's enemy speaks to the current irregular warfare environment.

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<sup>81</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, "Preliminary "Lessons" of the Israeli-Hezbollah War," 13.

## The Strategic Environment

In his book, *Future Jihad*, Walid Phares poses an important question when considering the context of the current strategic environment:

Are the terrorists waging a war whose name we do not want to accept, or is the international community waging a war against terrorism while ignoring its goals and its ideology?<sup>82</sup>

Multiple entry points, or narratives, frame the strategic context of this war, while far from an inclusive list of narratives; those below illustrate the range of viewpoints of the current environment.

### **Samuel P. Huntington**

In his book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Samuel P. Huntington offers the following assessment of the problem.

The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power.<sup>83</sup>

Huntington describes the current Islamic resurgence in the following manner.

It is a broad intellectual, cultural, social, and political movement prevalent throughout the Islamic world. Islamic “fundamentalism,” commonly conceived as political Islam, is only one component in the much more extensive revival of Islamic ideas, practices, and rhetoric and the rededication to Islam by Muslim populations.<sup>84</sup>

Huntington defines “fault lines conflicts” as “communal conflicts between states or groups from different civilizations.”<sup>85</sup> He notes that, “fault line wars are almost always between peoples of different religions.”<sup>86</sup> He describes the pattern of fault line

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<sup>82</sup> Walid Phares, *Future Jihad*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2005): 17.

<sup>83</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1996): 217.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

wars as follows: “Fault line wars go through processes of intensification, expansion, containment, interruption, and, rarely, resolution.”<sup>87</sup>

### **Major Stephen P. Lambert**

In his book, *Y- The Source of Islamic Revolutionary Conduct*, Major Stephen P. Lambert offers a more complex view of the strategic situation and defines the problem in terms of “religious revolutionary warfare.”<sup>88</sup> Major Lambert notes,

He has not hijacked his religion and he is not a nominal follower - rather, he is an Islamic purist, and passionately follows the example of his Prophet Mohammed. He desperately seeks to restore the preeminence of Islam - to purify the Muslim world of corrupt and apostate rulers, and to bring the entire world under the Islamic rightly guided way of life.<sup>89</sup>

If Major Lambert’s argument is correct, his enemy is more challenging as he might not be contained along Huntington’s geographic “fault lines”.

### **Militant Ideology Atlas**

The *Militant Ideology Atlas*, published by the Combating Terrorism Center located at the United States Military Academy, identifies a series of “constituencies” within the Muslim world, each with its own “influential thinkers,” that need to be understood and ultimately leveraged in the War on Terrorism.<sup>90</sup> Each constituency layer of the circle “is responsive to the leaders in the broader constituencies of which it is part, but each also has its own set of thinkers that are best positioned to influence their base.”<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 266.

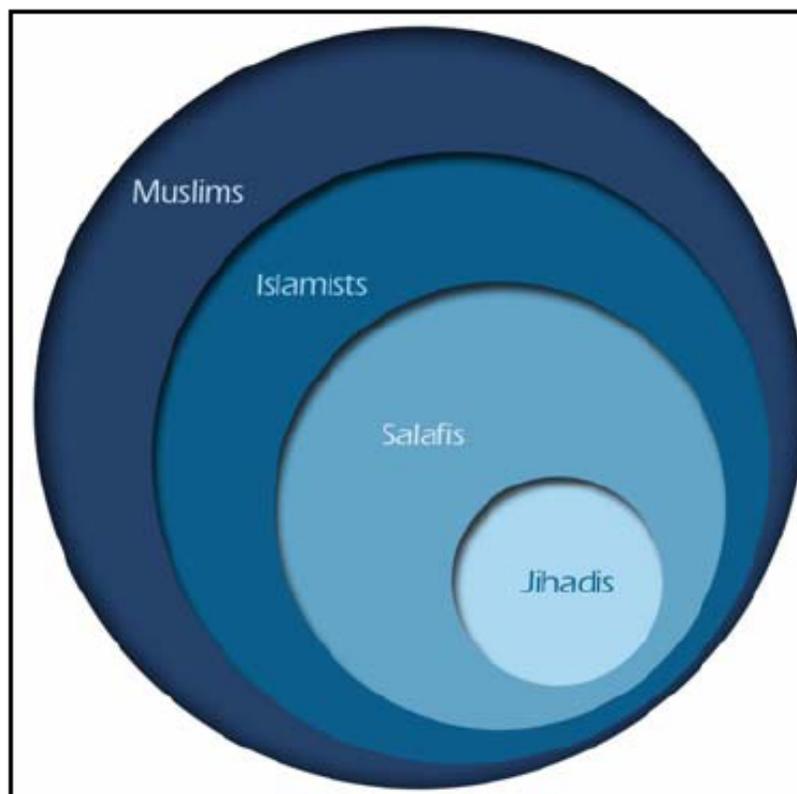
<sup>88</sup> “The enemy is not a terrorist. The enemy’s goals are nothing less than a revolutionary transformation of the status quo. Though the enemy employs terror as part of his strategy, his goal is not to terrorize but to revolutionize the world.” Stephen P. Lambert, *Y- The Source of Islamic Revolutionary Conduct* (Washington: Joint Military Intelligence College, 2005): 131.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>90</sup> William McCants, ed., “Militant Ideology Atlas,” *Combating Terrorism Center* (November 2006): 5, accessed at [www.ctc.usam.edu/atlas/default.asp](http://www.ctc.usam.edu/atlas/default.asp) on 19 November 2006.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 5.

Figure 1 graphically captures the relationship between the jihadis and the larger community of Muslims.



**Figure 1 - Jihadis Constituencies<sup>92</sup>**

It is important to highlight this document’s description of the Islamic community as a backdrop for a later review of the pillars of the U.S strategy for the War on Terrorism. The Islamists are “people who want Islamic law to be the primary source of law and cultural identity in a state. They differ over the meaning of this objective and means of achieving it.”<sup>93</sup> Salafis are:

Sunni Muslims who want to establish and govern Islamic states based solely on the Qur’an and the example of the Prophet as understood by the first generations

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 6.

of Muslims close to Muhammed. Salafis differ over the final form of these states and the proper means for achieving them. This movement is ideologically akin to the medieval Puritan movement in England and America. The most influential Salafis are Saudi clerics.<sup>94</sup>

The innermost constituency is the Jihadis who are “holy warriors and today’s most prominent terrorists, whose movement is part of the larger Salafi Movement (but note that most Salafis are not Jihadis).”<sup>95</sup> The *Militant Ideology Atlas* argues the vehicle to leverage the Jihadis is through the Salafis clerics. Since “Jihadis thinkers draw their legitimacy from the same tradition as Salafis, Salafis scholars - particularly Saudi clerics - are best positioned to discredit the movement among other Salafis.”<sup>96</sup>

The *Militant Ideology Atlas* offers two important insights for the “battle of ideas” and the leanings of the “moderates” within the Muslim community. The *Militant Ideology Atlas* provides the following assessment of the Salafis movement:

The West, especially the United States, should be modest about its ability to intellectually challenge Salafism. The movement gained mass popularity during the last century and Salafis now constitute a majority or significant portion of the Muslim population in the Middle East and North Africa.<sup>97</sup>

With respect to leveraging moderate Muslims, which is a critical pillar in the United States *National Strategic Military Plan for the War on Terrorism*, the *Militant Ideology Atlas* offers the following caution:

The measure of moderation depends on what type of standard you use. If by “moderate” one means the renouncement of violence in the achievement of political ends, then the majority of Salafis are moderate. But if by “moderate” one means the acceptance of secularism, capitalism, democracy, gender equality, and a commitment to religious pluralism, then Salafis would be extremists on all counts.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 11.

The previous three authors considered the strategic environment with varying degrees of association to religion. The following three authors take a distinctly different view of the strategic environment.

### **Colin S. Gray**

Colin S. Gray frames the environment in relation to the United States and its actions. In his article, “Stability Operations in Strategic Perspective: A Skeptical View”, written in the Summer of 2006, he states, “Nationalism is the source of more hostility to American global policing behavior than is religious fanaticism.”<sup>99</sup> Most interesting, as it relates to challenge of countering a movement with mass appeal, is his assessment of the United States thus far in the War on Terrorism.

We are in danger of inflating the significance of al Qaeda and its imitators and, as a consequence, of setting off boldly to wage a long global war that is considerably misconceived. Above all else, we are likely to mistake local discontents for evidence of the evil influence of the global enemies of freedom.<sup>100</sup>

### **Thomas P.M. Barnett**

In his book, *Blueprint for Action*, published in 2005, Thomas P.M. Barnett views the strategic environment in terms of a *functioning core* and a *non-integrating gap*.<sup>101</sup> In terms of the transnational terrorist movement, he notes the following:

In effect, what radical Islamic fundamentalists such as Osama bin Laden seek is not merely a disconnect from globalization’s creeping embrace of the region’s more traditional societies, but a reconnect to an idealized past they believe offers a better alternative - an Islamic definition of globalization that contrasts itself with the Western one. Radical Islamic fundamentalism is a response to globalization

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<sup>99</sup> Colin S. Gray, “Stability Operations in Strategic Perspective: A Skeptical View,” *Parameters* (Summer 2006): 13.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>101</sup> *Functioning Core* - “Those parts of the world that are actively integrating their national economies into a global economy and that adhere to globalization’s emerging rule set.” Thomas P.M. Barnett, *Blueprint for Action* (New York, Penguin Books, 2005). xvi

*Non-Integrating Gap* - “Regions of the world that are largely disconnected from the global economy and rule sets that define its stability.” *Ibid.*, xvii.

first and foremost, and not merely a function of U.S. foreign policy in the region - no matter how their rhetoric may dwell on us.<sup>102</sup>

Barnett's assessment, which views radical Islamic fundamentalism as a response to globalization, is in sharp contrast to Colin S. Gray who would probably assess the U.S. indirect contribution to the conditions supporting the rise of fundamentalism at a higher level.

### **General (Ret) Anthony Zinni**

In his book, *The Battle for Peace*, published in early 2006, General (Ret) Anthony Zinni, the Commander of Central Command from 1997-2000, examines the strategic environment in terms of stability and the institutions that support making it an enduring reality. He sees the major issue affecting the environment for the United States is widespread instability caused by "a degraded or unsustainable environment and failing, incapable, or corrupt institutions."<sup>103</sup> General (Ret) Zinni argues that adapting to modernity has presented a significant challenge for the Islamic world and that one of the by-products has been the rise in Islamic extremist movements.<sup>104</sup> In his view, the battle is "a constant struggle to develop and build the measures, programs, systems, and institutions that will *prevent* crisis. The battle is the constant struggle to shape and manage the harmful elements in the environment that generates instabilities."<sup>105</sup>

In summary, these six works highlight the diversity of viewpoints for the strategic environment. They range from Huntington's preordained civilizational strife to General (Ret) Zinni's hopeful view that a focused effort on achieving a level of stability in the challenged areas of the world will reduce terrorism, a by-product of instability.

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>103</sup> Zinni, *The Battle for Peace*, 106.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 112.

## **The Adversary - Ideology, Goals, Reach and Environment**

### **The Adversary - Who**

*The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, dated September 2006, scopes the adversary very broadly. It is “a transnational terrorist movement fueled by a radical ideology of hatred, oppression and murder.”<sup>106</sup> The transnational terrorist network is lead by al Qaeda, which functions “as the movement’s vanguard and remains, along with its affiliate groups and those inspired by them, the most dangerous manifestation of the enemy, the movement is not controlled by any single individual, group, or state.”<sup>107</sup>

*The 9/11 Commission Report*, written two years earlier defines the problem more specifically:

The enemy is not just “terrorism.” It is the threat posed specifically by Islamist terrorism, by Bin Ladin and others who draw on a long tradition of extreme intolerance within a minority strain of Islam that does not distinguish politics from religion, and distorts both.<sup>108</sup>

As noted earlier, the study accepts the description of the adversary contained in the *National Strategy for Combatting Terrorism* and does not attempt to offer an alternative view.

### **The Adversary - Ideological Underpinnings**

The *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*, dated February 2006, describes the ideological foundation of the transnational terrorist network as follows:

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 225. Italics are original.

<sup>106</sup> President George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 1.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>108</sup> U.S. Government, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attack Upon the United States, Executive Summary* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 22 July 2004): 16, accessed at [www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report\\_Exec.pdf](http://www.9-11commission.gov/report/911Report_Exec.pdf) on 09 December 2006.

What unites the movement is a common vision, a common set of ideas about the nature and destiny of the world, and a common goal of ushering in totalitarian rule. What unites the movement is the ideology of oppression, violence and hate.<sup>109</sup>

The *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* provides some additional ideological clarity. It states, “Our terrorist enemies exploit Islam to serve a violent political vision.”<sup>110</sup> Both documents ask the reader to believe that the ideology for the transnational terrorist movement began spontaneously and that it has become a self-sustaining ideology fueled solely by the broad concepts of oppression, violence and hate.

### **The Adversary - Goals**

*The National Security Strategy for Combating Terrorism* defines al Qaeda’s goals as follows:

Fueled by a radical ideology and a false belief that the United States is the cause of most problems affecting Muslims today, our enemies seek to expel Western power and influence from the Muslim world and establish regimes that rule according to a violent and intolerant distortion of Islam. As illustrated by Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, such regimens would deny all political and religious freedoms and serve as sanctuaries for extremists to launch additional attacks against not only the United States, its allies and partners, but the Muslim world itself. Some among the enemy, particularly al-Qaida, harbor even greater territorial and geopolitical ambitions and aim to establish a single, pan-Islamic, totalitarian regime that stretches from Spain to Southeast Asia.<sup>111</sup>

Al Qaeda goals, as conveyed in the above-mentioned document, are illustrative for their scope, a single pan-Islamic state from Spain to Southeast Asia. It causes the reader to consider the resources required to support and continue this vision.

### **The Adversary - Operational Reach**

The task of estimating the adversary’s operational reach, both current and future, involves expanded considerations of the notion of force structure and integration of the

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<sup>109</sup> President George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 5.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

element of time. The *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* defines the force structure as the “transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks, and individuals - and their state and non-state supporters - which have in common that they exploit Islam and use terrorism for ideological ends.”<sup>112</sup> If supporters are included, the transnational terrorist movement potentially represents a significant number. *The Economist* reports that, “one consistent Gallup findings is that 8% of Muslims round the world - at least 80 million people - strongly support terrorist acts against America.”<sup>113</sup> It is also a complex force structure especially when considering the interrelated constituencies presented in the *Militant Ideology Atlas*.

The adversary’s consideration of time potentially derives from both religious and military imperatives and serves to form his operational reach. In his book, *Future Jihad*, Walid Phares captures the historical and religious appreciation of time for the adversary.

The jihadist logic is historicist and theological at the same time. In the mind of its authors, leaders, and militants, the initial *rissala* (mission) bestowed upon the Prophet, and carried on by the caliphs for more than thirteen centuries, is also theirs. Here lies the central power and enigma of the movement. The jihadist believe what was initiated in Muslim history ages ago is still moving forward today, just as it was in the beginning. They also believe that Allah is still commanding them to perform these *wajibat*, or duties, without interruption. And they are firmly convinced that the enemies of their ancestors as perceived in those times are still the enemies of today, in a war that has not ended for the last millennium and a half.<sup>114</sup>

The *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations, Version 2.0* highlights the strategic value of time for the adversary: “These adversaries view time as on their side which allows them

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>112</sup> Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*, 4.

<sup>113</sup> The Economist editors. “If You Want my Opinion” *The Economist* (March 10<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> 2007): 57.

<sup>114</sup> Walid Phares, *Future Jihad*, 50.

to impose prohibitive cost in lives and other national treasure with the intent of compelling us to a strategic retreat from a key region or course of action.”<sup>115</sup>

It is useful to juxtapose the American view of time with that of the transnational terrorist movement. Colin S. Gray notes that America is:

a future-oriented, still somewhat, ‘new’ country, one that has a founding faith in, hope for, and commitment to, human betterment, it is only to be expected that Americans should be less than respectful of what they might otherwise be inclined to allow history to teach them.<sup>116</sup>

Going forward, the operational reach of the transnational terrorist movement must be considered to ensure the United States has the resources and temporal view to successfully prosecute the War on Terrorism.

### **The Adversary - Preferred Environment**

While all warfare is political, irregular warfare is the most political of all, if one may be permitted to qualify an absolute. Military action has to be subordinated to political priorities.<sup>117</sup>

An irregular warfare environment clearly advantages the current adversary of the United States. This environment affords him the greatest opportunity to use the element of time “to erode our influence, patience and will by adopting unconventional methods in the face of overmatching US conventional capabilities.”<sup>118</sup> This environment also plays to the seams between cultures. Anthony H. Cordesman notes that in this environment, “Civilians become cultural, religious, and ideological weapons when the US is attacking different cultures.”<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations, Version 2.0*, 7.

<sup>116</sup> Colin S. Gray, “Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt?” 32.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>118</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations, Version 2.0*, 7.

<sup>119</sup> Anthony H. Cordesman, “Preliminary “Lessons” of the Israeli-Hezbollah War,” 11.

In summary, the current adversary, as described by U.S. policy documents, is a transnational terrorist movement, which employs an ideology of “oppression, violence and hate.” The adversary’s goal is the realization of “a single, pan-Islamic, totalitarian regime that stretches from Spain to Southeast Asia.”<sup>120</sup> The adversary’s consideration of time potentially derives from both religious and military imperatives and serves to form his operational reach. Finally, the current adversary operates in an environment that forces the United States into defensive cultural situations.

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<sup>120</sup> President George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 5.

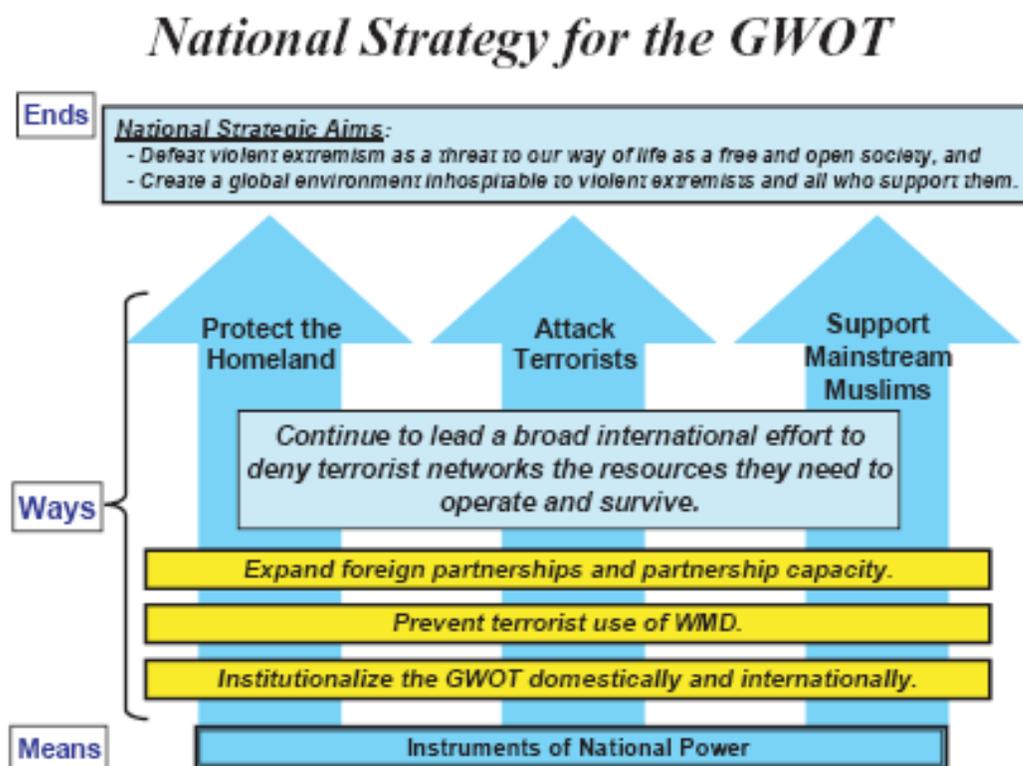
## The U.S. Strategy for the War on Terrorism

The United States is in the early years of a long struggle, similar to what our country faced in the early years of the Cold War.<sup>121</sup>

### The U.S. Strategy for the War on Terrorism

The pillars or “ways” of the U.S. strategy for the War on Terrorism center on protecting the homeland, attacking terrorists and supporting mainstream Muslims.<sup>122</sup>

Figure 2, shown below, from the *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*, graphically portrays the strategy.



**Figure 2 - National Strategy for the GWOT<sup>123</sup>**

<sup>121</sup> President George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, March 2006): 1

<sup>122</sup> Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*, 19.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

It is important to highlight that of these three pillars, the effort associated with “Supporting Mainstream Muslims” is the most critical to the long-term success of the United States in this war. The strategy assumes there is a sufficient number of mainstream Muslims to serve as the initial bulwark of moderation against the current generation of the extremists. The strategy further assumes that the initial body of mainstream Muslims can grow at a faster rate over time to counter the expected countervailing efforts of the extremists to exercise their influence within the Muslim community.

The *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* defines the “Extremists” and “Moderates” within the Muslim community as follows:

“Extremists” are those who (1) oppose - in principle and practice - the right of people to choose how we live and how to organize their societies and (2) support the murder of ordinary people to advance extremists ideological purposes. “Moderates” or “mainstream,” refer to those individuals who do not support the extremists. The term ‘moderate’ does not mean unobservant, secular or Westernizing. It applies to people who may differ from each other and from the average American in any number of ways except that they oppose killing of ordinary people.<sup>124</sup>

It is important to highlight what the strategy expects from religion and from individual mainstream Muslims. The strategy identifies Islam as the intellectual means to counter the violent extremists. The strategy expects individual members of the Muslim community to become active in stopping the extremists. The *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* states:

The belief that violent extremist efforts are harmful to the Islamic community, and contrary to the teachings of Islam, must come from within Islam itself. As the Muslim community progressively recognizes violent extremist actions as a threat to itself through introspection, mainstream moderates may become more active in stopping violent extremists.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 11.

In summary, the success of the U.S. strategy for the War on Terrorism depends heavily on the existence of a sufficient cadre of mainstream Muslims to serve as a counterweight to current and future violent extremists within the community. The strategy envisions a process of communal and individual introspection within the Muslim community to ponder the threat posed by the extremists.

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<sup>125</sup> Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on*

### Current Joint Doctrine

The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines “doctrine” as “a military principle or set of strategies.”<sup>126</sup> *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations*, dated 17 September 2006, and *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operations Planning*, dated 26 December 2006, are the source documents for framing the current doctrinal view of the operational environment and the operational design model. Doctrine is not static; commanders and staffs are empowered to modify it to accomplish the military end state.

#### **Operational Environment**

*Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*, broadly defines the operational environment as follows:

The operational environment is the composite of the conditions, circumstances and influences that effect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decision of the commander.<sup>127</sup>

It specifically characterizes the elements of the operational environment as:

... the air, land, sea, space, and associated adversary, friendly, and neutral systems (political, military, economic, social, informational, infrastructure, legal, and others), which are relevant to a specific joint operation.<sup>128</sup>

It amplifies the above citation with an important qualifier:

A systems understanding of the operational environment considers more than just an adversary’s military capabilities, order of battle, and tactics. Instead, it strives to provide a perspective of the interrelated systems that comprise the operational environment, relevant to a specific joint operation.<sup>129</sup>

*Terrorism*, 20.

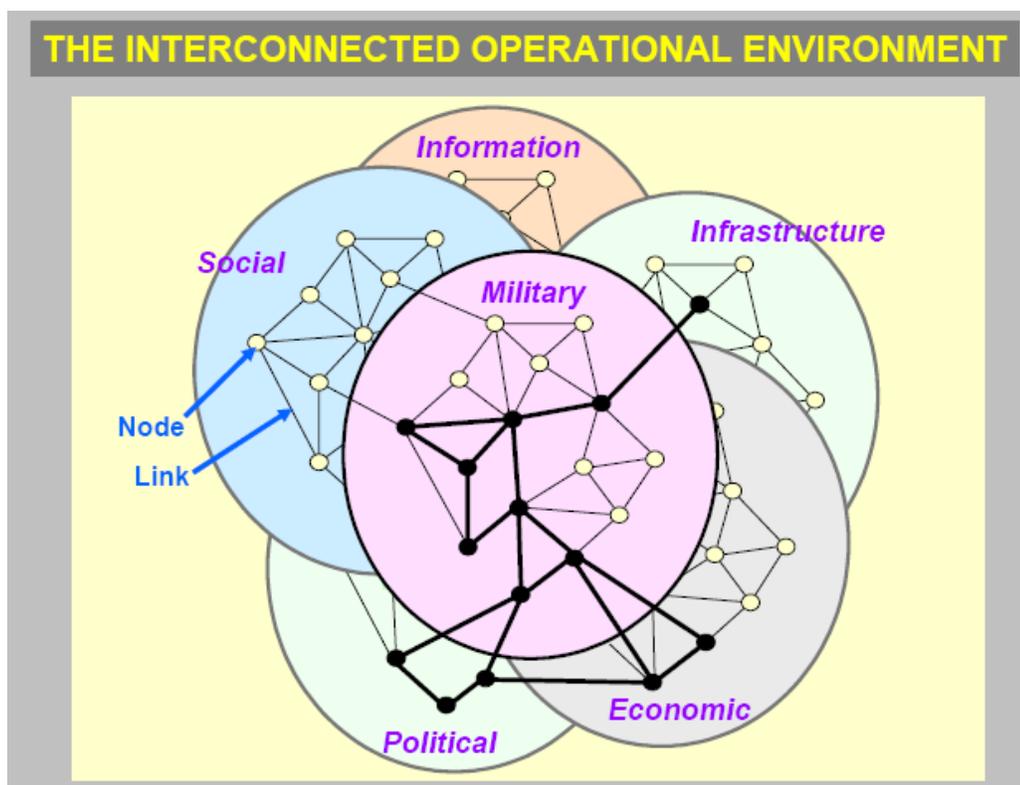
<sup>126</sup> Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, accessed at [www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary](http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary) on Mon - 30 Oct 06

<sup>127</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*, xv.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

It defines a system “as a functionally related group of elements forming a complex whole.”<sup>130</sup> Figure 3, shown below, graphically depicts the operational environment consisting of six systems.



**Figure 3 - Interconnected Operational Environment<sup>131</sup>**

*(Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning, dated 26 December 2006)*

It is interesting to note that *Joint Publication 5-0* includes the legal system in the base description of the operational environment but does not portray it graphically.<sup>132</sup>

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, xv.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, III-17.

<sup>132</sup> “The operational environment encompasses the air, land, sea, space, and associated adversary, friendly, and neutral systems (political, military, economic, social, informational, infrastructure, legal, and others), which are relevant to a specific joint operation.” *Ibid.*, xv.

In comparison, *Joint Publication 3-0* does not mention the legal system in its description of the operational environment.<sup>133</sup>

It is important to highlight the description of the information environment provided in *Joint Publication 3-0*, particularly in relation to potential considerations of the human dimension as an element in the overall operational environment:

The information environment is where humans and automated systems observe, orient, decide, and act upon information, and is therefore the principal environment of decision-making.<sup>134</sup>

*Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations* identifies three dimensions (physical, infrastructure and cognitive) in the information environment.<sup>135</sup> The physical dimension “is composed of the C2 systems and supporting infrastructures that enable individuals and organizations to conduct operations across the air, land, maritime and space domains.”<sup>136</sup> The informational dimension “is where information is collected, processed, stored, disseminated, displayed, and protected.”<sup>137</sup> The cognitive dimension “encompasses the mind of the decision maker and the target audience. This is the dimension in which commanders and staff think, perceive, visualize, and decide.”<sup>138</sup> Although, the description of the cognitive dimension does not formally mention the role of the adversary, it can be inferred.

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<sup>133</sup> “A systems perspective of the operational environment strives to provide an understanding of the interrelated systems (e.g., political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, and others) relevant to a specific joint operation without regard to geographic boundaries.” Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 17 September 2006): II-21.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, II-21.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, II-21.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, II-21.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, II-21.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, II-21.

In summary, *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations*, and *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning* would suggest, upon initial reading, an operational environment consisting of only six primary systems, which are not necessarily conducive to framing the human dimension. However, both publications include references to considerations of “other systems” which acknowledges there are additional components to the environment.<sup>139</sup> Most encouragingly, *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations* mentions “intangible” factors like “culture” in an examination of the operational environment.<sup>140</sup> *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*, provides a critical disclaimer reference systems perspective as a whole. It offers the following:

The systems perspective is not intended to be a “systems engineering” approach to the conduct of military operations. While some systems (such as infrastructure) are relatively static, many systems in the operational environment are inherently complex and dynamic. Although the systems approach is helpful in understanding the complex nature and composition of a given system or subsystem, this approach cannot account for all variables. Most systems can often exhibit unpredictable, surprising, and uncontrolled behaviors.<sup>141</sup>

### **Operational Design**

*Joint Publication 5-0* defines operational design as “the conception and construction of the framework that underpins a joint operation plan and its subsequent execution.”<sup>142</sup> The elements of the operational design, shown below in Figure 4, are “tools to help commanders and their staffs visualize the campaign or operation and shape the CONOPS.”<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> “A systems perspective of the operational environment strives to provide an understanding of interrelated systems (e.g., political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, and others) relevant to a specific joint operation with regard to geographic boundaries.” *Ibid.*, II-21.

<sup>140</sup> “The operational environment also includes a wide variety of intangible factors such as the culture, perceptions, beliefs, and values of an adversary, neutral, or friendly political and social systems.” *Ibid.*, II-24.

<sup>141</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*, III-18.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, xvii.

<sup>143</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations*, IV-4.

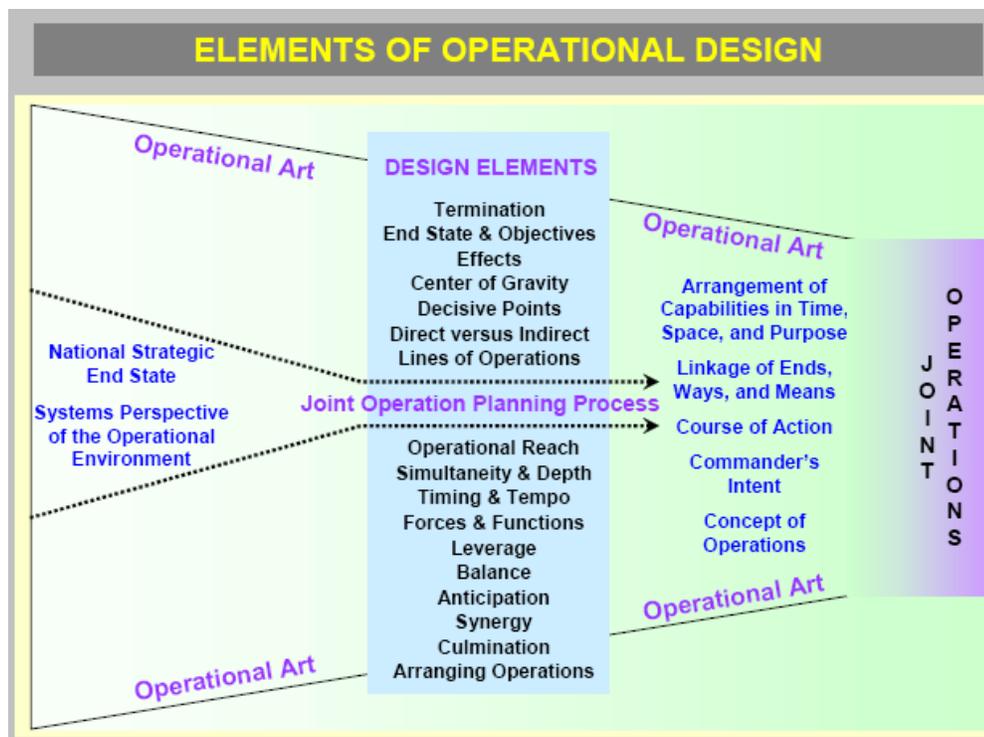


Figure 4 - Operational Design<sup>144</sup>

(Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning, dated 26 December 2006)

It is critical to highlight how joint doctrine describes the design process and what allowances it makes for additional design elements. As stated in *Joint Publication 3-0*,

JFC's and their staffs use a number of operational design elements to help them visualize the arrangement of actions in time, space, and purpose to accomplish their mission. These elements can be used selectively in any joint operation; however, their application is broadest in the context of a joint campaign or major operation. The result of this process should be a framework that forms the basis for the joint campaign or operation plan and the conceptual linkage of ends, ways, and means.<sup>145</sup>

The process description from *Joint Publication 3-0* recognizes that consideration of operational design elements is dependent on the scope of the joint operation.

It is important to examine what consideration, if any, the operational design model makes for design elements other than the seventeen formally articulated. Unlike

<sup>144</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*, IV-5.

the model for the operational environment, which offers the possibility for “other systems”, the operational design model does not provide a similar qualifier.<sup>146</sup> The absence of a qualifier suggests that the design elements presented in Figure 4 are a comprehensive list. The counter-argument is that doctrine can be modified, as required, and that additional operational design element(s) can be utilized.

It is also important to note that the element of time is not formally listed in the operational design model. However, it is embedded in several of the operational design elements. The design element of *Termination* implicitly acknowledges a temporal factor. *Joint Publication 3-0* states, “Knowing when to terminate all types of military operations and how to preserve achieved military objectives is key to bringing the national and strategic end state to fruition.”<sup>147</sup> The factor of time is also integral to the formulation of *End State and Objectives*. *Joint Publication 3-0* offers, “This end state will normally represent a point in time or circumstances which the President does not require the military instrument of national power to achieve remaining objectives of the national strategic end state.”<sup>148</sup> *Joint Publication 3-0* defines *Operational Reach* as “the distance and duration over which a joint force can successfully employ military capabilities.”<sup>149</sup> It describes the design element of *Depth* in terms of “time as well as space.”<sup>150</sup> It describes the design element of *Timing* as the “point in time that best exploits friendly

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<sup>145</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations*, IV-4.

<sup>146</sup> “The operational environment encompasses the air, land, sea, space, and associated adversary, friendly, and neutral systems (political, military, economic, social, informational, infrastructure, legal, and others) which are relevant to a specific joint operation.” Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*, xv.

<sup>147</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations*, IV-7.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, IV-7.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, IV-13.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, IV-14.

capabilities and inhibits the enemy.”<sup>151</sup> When addressing the design element of *Culmination*, the planner considers the point in time when the capacity to continue the current effort, both in the offensive and defensive situations, is limited.<sup>152</sup> It is important to note that operational design model does express the factor of time in terms of the arrangement of capabilities in a *Time, Space, and Purpose* relationship.<sup>153</sup>

In summary, the operational design process is a means to frame critical factors when building a joint operations plan in a military campaign. These elements represent a broad range of options for the planners to consider. Surprisingly, the operational design model does not formally list *Operational Time* as a design element but embeds this factor within several other elements.

### **Cultural Underpinnings of Current Joint Doctrine**

It is fair, given the emphasis on culture in general these days, to examine the “cultural underpinnings” of joint doctrine. In terms of the larger American culture, Colin S. Gray offers two key points in his article, *Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy* that are illustrative for this point. First, “The traditional American way of war was developed to defeat regular enemies. It reflects many of the strengths of American society and culture.”<sup>154</sup> Second, “Americans have approached warfare as a regrettable occasional evil that has to be concluded as decisively and rapidly as possible.”<sup>155</sup>

In terms of military culture, the current framing mechanism for the operational environment is the systems approach, which is derivative of Colonel (Ret) Warden’s

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid., IV-15.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., IV-19.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., IV-6.

<sup>154</sup> Colin S. Gray, “Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt?” vi.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 44.

Five-Ring Model.<sup>156</sup> His model represents the enemy in terms of five major systems, which he represents as five concentric rings of increasing importance. These systems, from the most critical to least critical, are leadership, processes, infrastructure, population and agents / fielded forces.<sup>157</sup> This approach towards the operational environment and the enemy tends to focus on the physical aspects of a given environment. As Dr. Vego notes, “Advocates of the systems approach seek scientific certainties and rationality where uncertainty, chaos and irrationality abound. They assume that all the elements of the situation can somehow be precisely determined and that no mistake will be made.”<sup>158</sup> The human dimension offers none of the precision found in the physical environment. Dr Vego notes, “In contrast to tangibles, intangibles are hard or even impossible to quantify with any degree of precision. Intangibles pertain for the most part to human elements, such as leadership, command and control, morale and discipline, and training.”<sup>159</sup> *Joint Publication 5-0* seems to offer support to Dr. Vego’s assertion where it states, “Rather than being an engineered solution, a military operation evolves as the joint force adapts responsively to systems that are also adapting.”<sup>160</sup>

In summary, it is important to recognize the external and internal “cultural” underpinnings of joint doctrine. From the larger society, the American way of war favors traditional opponents and rapid closure of military actions. Within joint doctrine, the current formation of the operational environment derives from a systems approach, which tends to produce a mechanical view of the enemy. Interestingly, there is some

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<sup>156</sup> Vego, “Systems Approach to Center of Gravity,” 5.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>160</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*, III-18.

recognition within joint doctrine of the limitations of this approach. *Joint Publication 3-0* states the “systems perspective is not intended to be a ‘systems engineering’ approach to the conduct of military operations.”<sup>161</sup>

It is important to note that within current joint doctrine there is an interesting omission of the factor of time in the operational design model. Time is a central component for military planners as the next chapter highlights in the discussion of the AirLand Battle doctrine.

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid., III-18.

### **AirLand Battle Doctrine**

The need for deep attack emerges from the nature of our potential enemies - their doctrine and their numerically superior forces.<sup>162</sup>

The existence of these follow-on echelons gives the enemy a strong grip on the initiative which we must wrest from him and then retain in order to win.<sup>163</sup>

These citations from General (Ret) Donn A. Starry's article, *Extending the Battlefield*, which appeared in *Military Review* in 1981, to draw out the potential similarities between the strategic environment of the 1980s and the strategic environment today. This section examines the conceptual response to the Soviet challenge.

#### **Strategic Setting**

In the early 1980s, the United States was on the strategic defensive. It faced numerically superior Warsaw Pact forces in Central Europe.<sup>164</sup> Additionally, the United States faced a changing nuclear balance. In his article, General (Ret) Starry highlights the significance of this situation. "As the strategic nuclear balance teeters, so grows the enemy's perception of his own freedom of action at theater levels - conventional and nuclear."<sup>165</sup> Figure 5, shown below, graphically depicts the Soviet operational concept.

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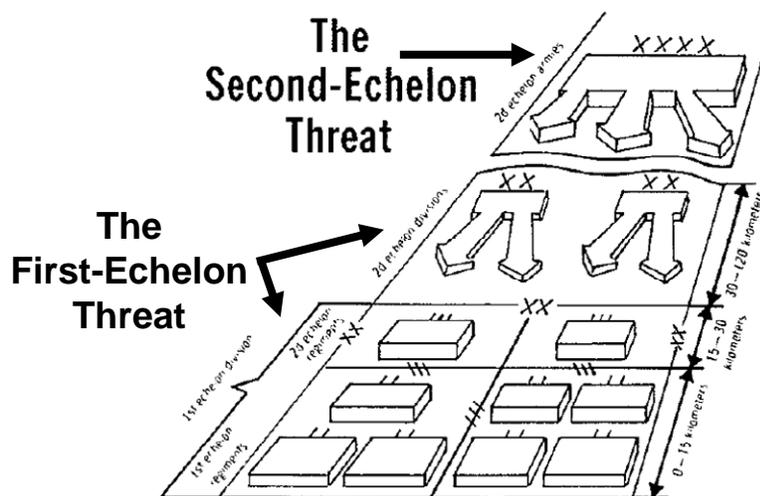
<sup>162</sup> Starry, "Extending the Battlefield," 34.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Romjue, "The Evolution of the Airland Battle Concept," 5.

<sup>165</sup> Starry, "Extending the Battlefield," 34.

## Soviet Operational Concept



**Figure 5 - Soviet Operational Concept**<sup>166</sup>

The operational flexibility of the Soviet concept is important to recall. The base Soviet concept centered on “mass, momentum and continuous combat” to cause “the collapse in the defender’s system of defense.”<sup>167</sup> The variant to the base concept involved “surprise” being “substituted for mass in a daring thrust tactic.”<sup>168</sup> The key feature of the Soviet concept was forces echeloned over prescribed distances relative to time.

### AirLand Battle Doctrine

The conceptual response to the Soviet challenge was the AirLand Battle doctrine. It offered a different view of the battlefield. It demanded integration of ground and air

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

power. Most importantly, it provided a viable means to challenge Soviet operational flexibility.

The AirLand Battle doctrine envisioned an “extended battlefield” consisting of the close battle and a deep battle connected both in time and space.<sup>169</sup> In his article, *The Evolution of the AirLand Battle Concept*, John L. Romjue describes the battlefield as follows: it “had a deeper physical dimension, a time dimension, and airland dimension now more critical than ever before, and a possible chemical and nuclear dimension.”<sup>170</sup> Most significantly, the AirLand Battle doctrine viewed actions in the close-in battle and actions in the deep battle as part of “one engagement” where “The deep attack required tight coordination with the close-in battle so that scarce means of attack would not be wasted.”<sup>171</sup>

The most notable feature of the AirLand Battle doctrine was the deep attack against the Soviet second echelon forces and its rationale was simple. General (Ret) Starry characterized this logic as follows:

Because of the enemy’s advantage in numbers, attack of the follow-on echelons must always begin when those echelons are relatively deep in enemy territory. If an outnumbered defender waits until his numerically superior foe has penetrated the defender’s territory to mount a counterattack, it is always too late to bring effective forces and fires to bear to defeat the incursion.<sup>172</sup>

Relieving pressure on forces in the close battle provided “opportunities for friendly action - attack, counterattack or reconstitution of the defense - on favorable ground well forward in the battle area.”<sup>173</sup> The necessity of the deep attack is important to recall.

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 32

<sup>170</sup> John L. Romjue, “The Evolution of the Airland Battle Concept,” 3.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>172</sup> Starry, “Extending the Battlefield,” 35

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 38.

The authors of the concept did not see the deep attack as a matter of choice but as an absolute necessity for winning in an East-West confrontation in Europe. The great numerical superiority of the enemy's follow-on echelons, not the type of operational maneuver the Soviets might employ, was the significant factor that demanded it.<sup>174</sup>

The value of the deep attack was undeniable as the alternative was continuous engagement with Soviet forces in a close battle.

Mastery of the element of time was critical to the AirLand Battle doctrine. Soviet commanders adhered to strict movement timelines in accordance with operational concept shown in Figure 5. For U.S. forces, time was in relation to Soviet actions and created a "point when commanders must take action - 12 hours away for the brigade, 24 for the division, and 72 for the corps."<sup>175</sup>

It is important to note that the AirLand Battle doctrine was not only an Army construct. The success of the doctrine demanded integration of military power. "The character of modern battle and the geographical range of US national interests make it imperative that the Army fight as part of a team with the tactical forces of the US Air Force, the US Marine Corps, and the US Navy."<sup>176</sup>

### **Legacy and Relevance of the AirLand Battle Doctrine**

Emphasizing the lesson Starry brought back from the Golan Heights, the new manual urged officers and men to seize the initiative – to go on the offensive tactically and operationally, even when on the defensive strategically. Even if a powerful enemy has broken through, as the Syrian did at first, surprise counterattacks should be aimed at the weak spots, rather than frontally against the decisive point of the breakthrough.<sup>177</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> John L. Romjue, "The Evolution of the Airland Battle Concept," 5.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>176</sup> U.S. Army, Operations, FM 100-5. (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 20 August 2006). 1-5.

<sup>177</sup> Alvin and Heidi Tofler, *War and Anti-War* (New York: Warner Books, 1993): 61.

The legacy of the AirLand Battle doctrine was its visualization of the operational battlefield, and specifically understanding the operational implications of the deep attack. In his article, *Extending the Battlefield*, General (Ret) Starry describes the significance of the deep battle: “It is essential to winning because it creates opportunities to seize and retain the initiative.”<sup>178</sup>

AirLand Battle doctrine is significant for today’s environment for two reasons. First, the AirLand Battle doctrine highlights the importance of visualizing the entire battlefield with particular consideration of this adversary’s operational reach particularly with the element of time. Second, the AirLand Battle doctrine provides a useful example of operational maneuver, specifically a deep attack, to regain the initiative when fighting a numerically superior force. The counter argument to the second point is that the United States is not fighting a numerically superior force in the War on Terrorism but rather it is fighting a relatively small number of dedicated transnational terrorists. This is potentially a correct assessment if just the current close battle, day-to-day operations, is considered. However, envisioning the operational reach of the transnational terrorist movement through the lens of time produces a view of a potentially much larger force. This is particularly true if the movement’s ideology gains greater acceptance with the Muslim community beyond the initial set of followers.

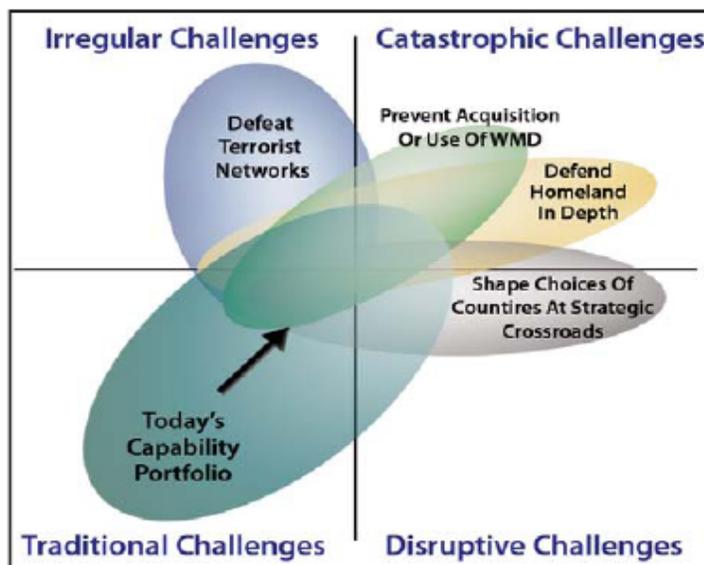
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<sup>178</sup> Starry, “Extending the Battlefield,” 38.

### Recommendations to Joint Doctrine

The enemy cannot be viewed as a system of systems. Humans are not machines.<sup>179</sup>

In war, where the outcome is so dependent on success within the human dimension, it is essential for joint doctrine to sufficiently value this factor regardless of the challenge. The 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* identifies several challenges (traditional, irregular, catastrophic and disruptive) facing the United States.<sup>180</sup> Figure 6, shown below, graphically portrays these challenges each with an associated threat.



As the diagram shows, the Department is shifting its portfolio of capabilities to address irregular, catastrophic and disruptive challenges while sustaining capabilities to address traditional challenges.

**Figure 6 - Challenges<sup>181</sup>**

It is interesting to note how the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* considers the challenges:

<sup>179</sup> Vego, "Systems Approach to Center of Gravity," 19.

<sup>180</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 19.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

The strategy acknowledges that although the U.S. military maintains considerable advantages in traditional forms of warfare, this realm is not the only, or even the most likely, one in which adversaries will challenge the United States during the period immediately ahead. Enemies are more likely to pose asymmetric threats, including irregular, catastrophic and disruptive challenges. Some, such as non-state actors, will chose irregular warfare - including terrorism, insurgency or guerilla warfare - in an attempt to break our will through protracted conflict.<sup>182</sup>

Should each challenge have its own model for the operational environment?

Should joint doctrine optimize its operational environment model for the most likely challenge? Should joint doctrine build a model universal for the operational environment?

### **Recommended Construct for the Operational Environment**

The recommended change to the operational environment model attempts to combine critical elements from Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Montgomery McFate. From Sun Tzu, the model recognizes the importance of the knowing yourself and the enemy.<sup>183</sup> From Clausewitz, it recognizes the interaction between “the armed forces,” “the country,” and “the enemy’s will.”<sup>184</sup> The model modifies the term “armed forces” to “forces” to represent all forces, armed and non-armed members. The model changes the term “country” to “ideas” to represent the ideological component of a given people. From Montgomery McFate, the model expands the DIME and DIMEFIL constructs by attempting to factor human terrain into the calculus of strategic power. Finally, the model attempts to establish a relationship between current and future strategic power and past human terrain factors.

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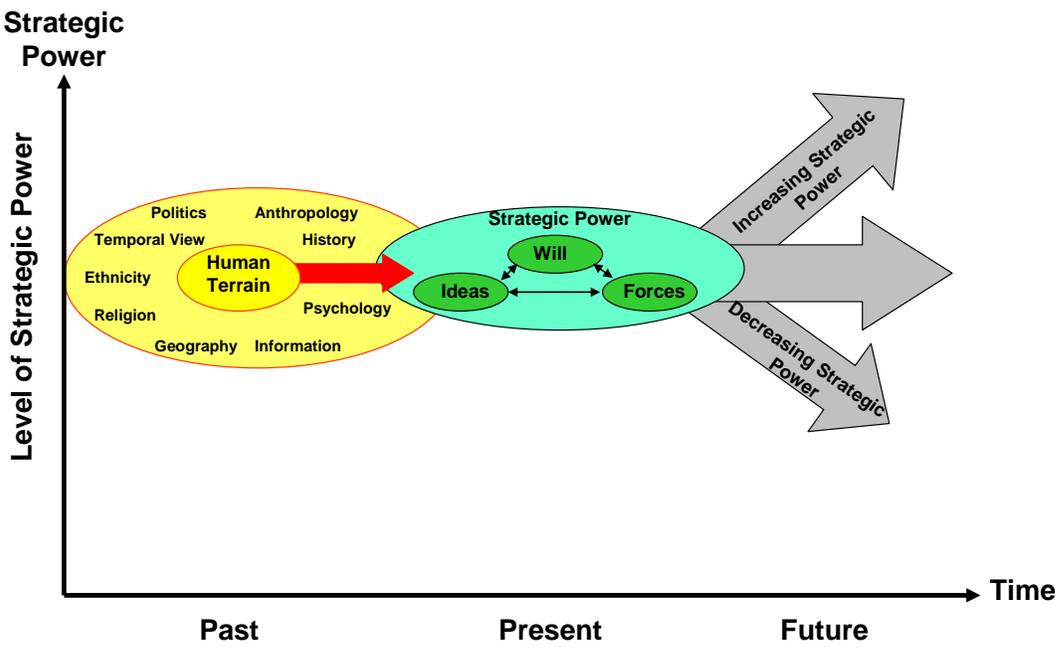
<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>183</sup> “Know the enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.” Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, 84.

<sup>184</sup> “When we are dealing with the subject of war plans, we shall investigate in greater detail what is meant by disarming a country. But we should at once distinguish between three things, three broad objectives, which between them cover everything: the *armed forces*, the *country*, and the *enemy’s will*.” Clausewitz, *On War*, 102. Italics are original.

Figure 7, shown below, is the recommended construct for the operational environment.

# The Operational Environment



**Figure 7 - Recommended Construct for the Operational Environment**

The left side of the model attempts to convey some of the factors, which form the human terrain of a given area. The right side of the model shows potential outcomes for strategic power. The strategic trajectory of a given people depends on the interaction, over time, between the human terrain and the political factors of will, ideas and forces.

In summary, the recommended model for the operational environment attempts to value the human dimension and recognize its impact on any given environment. This model considers strategic power and suggests a connection between the human terrain

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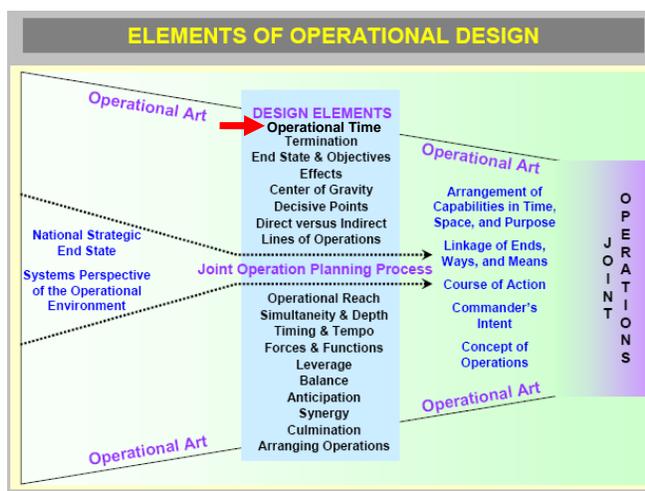
and the elements that form and determine power. Additionally, the model attempts to introduce the factor of time into assessment process of future strategic power.

### Recommended Change to the Operational Design Model

In his article, “Irregular Enemies and Essence of Strategy,” Colin S. Gray makes the following important observation reference the American approach to time:

The Western Theory of war and strategy pays too little attention to war’s temporal dimension. In particular, there is too little recognition that time itself can be a weapon. It can be used purposefully to compensate for material or other weakness, and to expose and stress the vulnerability of the enemy. In irregular warfare, the materially disadvantaged combatant is obliged to try to win slowly, for no other reason that he cannot win swiftly.<sup>185</sup>

In war, where the element of time is intrinsically linked to the factor of will, it is essential for joint doctrine to formally factor time as a design element. Figure 8, shown below, includes *operational time* as the first element in the design process.



**Figure 8 - Recommended Change to the Operational Design Model**

<sup>185</sup> Colin S. Gray, “Irregular Enemies and the Essence of Strategy: Can the American Way of War Adapt?” 26.

The following working definition is offered for *operational time*. It is the temporal resource available to the Joint Force Commander to achieve the required military end state. The *national strategic end state* should ideally articulate a consideration of *operational time*, which the President of the United States derives from an assessment of national will.<sup>186</sup> *Operational time* frames the development of the design elements of the two foundational design elements of *termination* and *end state*.<sup>187</sup> These elements cannot be analyzed without an appreciation of *operational time*. If the *national strategic end state* does articulate such consideration of time, then the JFC commander must request an assessment of this factor from national leadership in order to realistically design a campaign.

In summary, the recommended model for the Operational Design attempts to value the element of time and recognize its relationship to achievement of the national strategic end state. The model formally elevates operational time as a design element vice subordination in other elements. The model purposely places operational time at the top of the list of elements, as it is critical to the elements of termination and end state.

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<sup>186</sup> *National Strategic End State* - "The President and Secretary of Defense, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), direct the national effort to ensure the national strategic objectives (i.e., the national strategic end state) and joint operation criteria are clearly defined, understood, and achievable." Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Operations, Revision Final Coordination* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 23 December 2005): x.

<sup>187</sup> *Termination* - "Termination is discussed first among the elements of operational design because effective planning cannot occur without a clear understanding of the end state and the conditions that must exist to end military operations. Knowing when to terminate military operations and how to preserve achieved advantages is key to achieving the national strategic end state." Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*, IV-6.

*End State and Objectives* - "Once the termination criteria are established, operational design continues with the development of the strategic military objectives and definition of the military end state. This end state normally will represent a point in time and / or circumstance beyond which the President

### A Decisive Point in War on Terrorism

It their book, *Thinking in Time*, Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May review cases of national level decision-making with particular emphasis on how key leaders considered the past and its relationship to the future in their decisions. Most useful for this paper is their discussion of “time-streams:”

For the essence of thinking in time-streams is imagining the future as it may be when it becomes the past - with some intelligible continuity but richly complex and able to surprise.<sup>188</sup>

It is important, just as when the West faced the Soviet armies in Europe, to conceptualize or time-stream the operational reach of the current adversary to inform the strategic setting for the War on Terrorism.

#### **Strategic Setting**

The United States faces an adversary who possesses, as 11 September 2001 clearly demonstrated the intent, capability and will to do great harm to the United States. The *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, presents the strategic goals of the enemy and it is worthwhile in reviewing them when considering his potential operational reach.

Fueled by a radical ideology and a false belief that the United States is the cause of most problems affecting Muslims today, our enemies seek to expel Western power and influence from the Muslim world and establish regimes that rule according to a violent and intolerant distortion of Islam. As illustrated by Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, such regimens would deny all political and religious freedoms and serve as sanctuaries for extremists to launch additional attacks against not only the United States, its allies and partners, but also the Muslim world itself. Some among the enemy, particularly al-Qaida, harbor even greater territorial and geopolitical ambitions and aim to establish a single, pan-Islamic, totalitarian regime that stretches from Spain to Southeast Asia.<sup>189</sup>

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does not require the military instrument of national power to achieve the remaining national strategic objectives.” Ibid., IV-6.

<sup>188</sup> Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time* (New York: The Free Press): 253.

<sup>189</sup> President George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 5.

Understanding the duration in time or operational reach of the current adversary requires two assumptions. The first assumption is that the War began on 1991, ten years prior to 11 September 2001. This data point is from *The 9/11 Commission Report*. The report notes that, “Bin Laden built over the course of a decade a dynamic and lethal organization. He built an infrastructure and organization in Afghanistan that could attract, train, and use recruits against ever more ambitious targets.”<sup>190</sup> Assigning a start date for the War is potentially contentious as it invites comparison to potentially more historic dates like 1948 or 1967. This assumption serves to initialize the time-stream.

The second assumption is that the current generation of extremists, defined as Al Qa’ida and the Al Qa’ida Associated Movement, will be able to transfer their ideology and passion to, at least, a similar size cohort of like-minded extremists within the emerging Muslim generation. This is a realistic assumption based on the recruiting success of transnational terrorist movement. The *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* acknowledges Al Qa’ida’s ability to grow as an organization and an ideology.

The AQN’s (Al Qa’ida Network) adaptation or evolution resulted in the creation of an extremist “movement,” referred to by intelligence analysts as AQAM (Al Qa’ida Associated Movement), extending extremism and terrorist tactics well beyond the original organization.<sup>191</sup>

This assumption serves to highlight the expected structural growth of the current adversary. Together these assumptions form the basis for a battlefield extended in time and frame the key human terrain in this War.

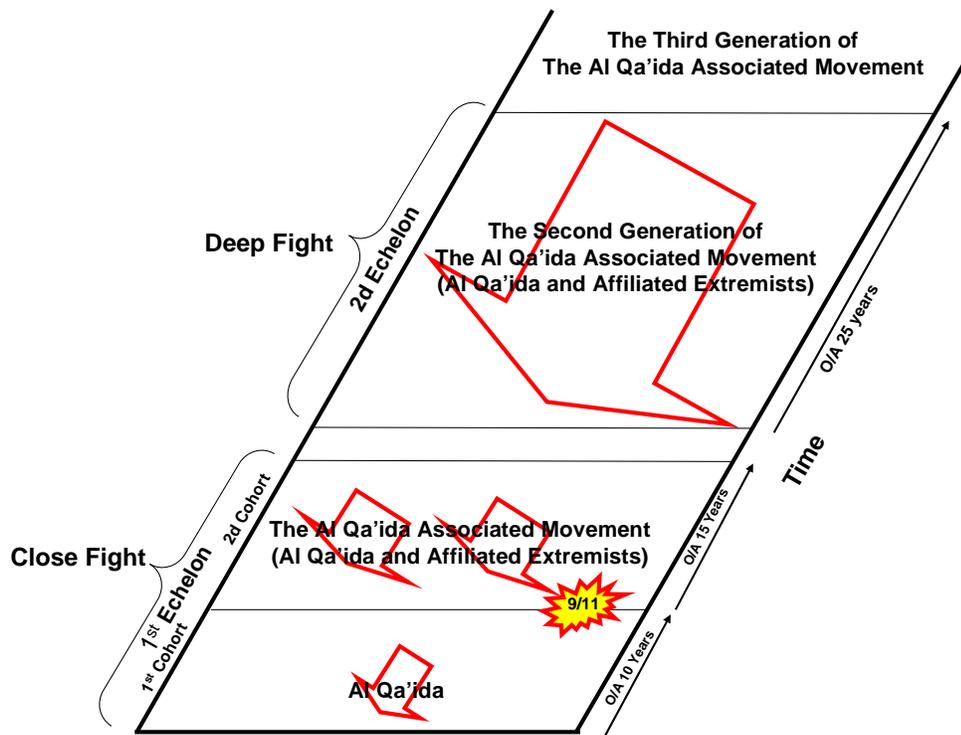
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<sup>190</sup> U.S. Government, *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attack Upon the United States, Executive Summary*, 4.

<sup>191</sup> Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism*, 13.

## Key Human Terrain

Figure 9, shown below, portrays the extended battlefield in a generational struggle. The graphic casts the second generation or echelon of the transnational terrorist movement in a manner similar to the second echelon of the Soviet armor formations during the Cold War.



**Figure 9 - Key Human Terrain**

The second echelon of the transnational terrorist movement consists of physical and ideological elements. The physical element is the rising cohort of like-minded extremists recruited and formed by the initial cohorts of terrorists. The ideological element of the second echelon is the support the transnational terrorist movement enjoys within a portion of the Muslim community. As reported in *The Economist*, “one consistent Gallup findings is that 8% of Muslims round the world - at least 80 million people - strongly

support terrorist acts against America.”<sup>192</sup> The second generation of the transnational terrorist movement, Al Qa’ida Associated Movement, occupies commanding terrain, or to draw on Sun Tzu, a “sunny position” within the human terrain as this generation, through its actions, can significantly affect the entire Muslim community. This generation represents key human terrain as it affords a marked advantage to the owner or the entity that can influence it.

### **A Decisive Point**

A geographic place, specific key event, critical factor, or function that, when acted upon, allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an adversary or contribute materially to achieving success.<sup>193</sup>

The second echelon of the transnational terrorist movement qualifies as a decisive point in the War on Terrorism. Similar to the Soviet second echelon in the Cold War, this echelon provides the current leaders of the transnational terrorist movement with tremendous operational flexibility. It allows them to conduct physical or ideological attacks in the present and in the future, that can significantly influence the outcome of the War. It is important to recall the operational challenge posed by the Soviet concept which centered on “mass, momentum and continuous combat” to cause “the collapse in the defender’s system of defense.”<sup>194</sup> The second echelon of the transnational terrorist movement represents a similar challenge to the West. Success in the War on Terrorism requires winning not only the close battles of Iraq and Afghanistan, but winning as well

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<sup>192</sup> The Economist editors. “If You Want my Opinion” *The Economist* (March 10<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> 2007): 57.

<sup>193</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning*, IV-16.

<sup>194</sup> Starry, “Extending the Battlefield,” 34.

the deep battle, the multi-decade battle, to influence the politics of the next generation or echelon of the transnational terrorists movement.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the paper has examined the growing discussion of culture and human terrain in military planning. It has examined the current adversary with particular emphasis on his operational reach and depth. The paper has reviewed the AirLand Battle doctrine for its applicability to the current fight specifically for its visualization of an extended battlefield and its rationale for the deep attack. The paper provides two recommendations to joint doctrine, specifically, a model of the operational environment that factors the human terrain and an operational design model that formally considers the element of time.

The recommended model for the operational environment attempts to value the human dimension and recognize its impact on any given environment. This model considers strategic power and suggests a connection between the human terrain and the elements, forces, ideas and will, that form and determines power.

The recommended model for the operational design attempts to value the element of time and recognize its relationship to achievement of the national strategic end state. The model formally elevates operational time as a design element vice subordination in other elements.

Enabled with these recommendations, it is possible to consider an extended battlefield in the War on Terrorism. Within this battlefield, it is clear that the second echelon of the transnational terrorist movement represents key human terrain as it provides the leaders of the Al Qai'da Associated Movement with tremendous operational flexibility to conduct physical and ideological attacks in present and well into the future. As such, the second echelon provides the leaders of the transnational terrorist movement

with the means to shape or time-stream a future, which envisions “a single, pan-Islamic, totalitarian regime that stretches from Spain to Southeast Asia.”<sup>195</sup> The existence of this second echelon requires the United States to develop a construct for a deep attack to retain its initiative in the War on Terrorism.

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<sup>195</sup> President George W. Bush, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, 5.

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