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# **STRATEGOS**

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## *EDITOR'S NOTE*

This is the ninth issue of our online journal, *Strategos*. The journal is designed to stimulate discussion among the members on pertinent strategic issues and provide a venue for publication among practitioners and scholars. In this issue we offer a number of articles aimed at a broad and varied matters of interest to the strategist. J.P. Clark's article poses several questions and some advice on the matter of the Army's institutional planning. He reminds us that the Army does seem to be at an important inflection point between wars, downsizing, and fiscal strait jacket. Strategic, that is long term institutional planning for the Army must start with the questions of what the Army must do and how it wants to do it. This institutional soul searching must quickly resolve missions and resources in order to find solutions in force structure and doctrine.

Bryan Groves article on transitioning from military to civilian led efforts reminds us that all wars must end, but in achieving long lasting strategic results---how they end is critical. What lessons can be learned from Iraq when compared to Afghanistan. The challenge looms large as this particular conflict winds down.

Jeremy Gray's article on China continues his timely discussion of the rise of China. The author offers hope that the West can indeed accommodate the peaceful rise of China. This insightful article provides a good look into the strategic culture of this growing power in Asia. I would only offer that strategists may well look at structure both domestic and regional to help understand the probabilities of conflict, but should never discount the role of chance and accident. The proverbial *Guns of August* scenario as described by Barbara Tuchman in her seminal account of the outbreak of World War I is always a caution to strategic optimism.

Finally, the frequency and quality of *Strategos* is directly related to the number and quality of submissions. This online journal seeks to engage the interests of all those interested in strategy and provide an outlet for views not perhaps found elsewhere. I heartily encourage all members of the association to join this forum and keep up the intellectual fire.

Mike Matheny, Ph.D.  
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April, 2012

# **The Challenges of Uncertainty: Forging an Adaptable Army for an Unpredictable World**

By Major J.P. Clark

War changes armies in many ways, one of which is the loss of peacetime illusions. An unlamented casualty of Iraq and Afghanistan is the notion, popular in the 1990s, that new technologies had granted the American soldier near perfect awareness of the battlefield while our adversaries remained lost in a primitive pre-digital fog of war. Theoretically, this capability was an exponential leap forward in capability. The several variations of this school of thought – some with considerably more merit than others – all hailed this development as a revolution in military affairs similar to earlier military milestones such as the introduction of gunpowder and mechanization.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, reasonable soldiers eagerly accept any technology providing a clearer understanding of the battlefield. Nonetheless, the essence of the American military profession remains the actual or threatened use of violence, typically to advance such interests as democracy, human rights, and global prosperity. Reconciling this quixotic mix of destructive means and constructive ends is far too complex to be made significantly easier by some mere tactical gadget, no matter how useful. After painfully relearning this, the 2009 Army Capstone Concept reaffirmed that “the nature of armed conflict remains firmly in the realm of uncertainty because of war’s political nature, its human dimension, its complexity, and continuous interactions with determined, adaptive enemies.”<sup>2</sup>

Yet this recognition is not particularly helpful. While we should certainly acknowledge that war will inevitably defy our expectations, this is ultimately a negative realization that offers no positive guidance for action. The false certainty of such concepts as network-centric warfare, one of the information-centered concepts of the 1990s, while dangerously reductionist, at least offered clear guidance as to how military forces should be manned, equipped, and trained.

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In contrast, acknowledging uncertainty does not naturally lead directly to any particular institutional strategy. In fact, there is not even a single form of uncertainty to guard against. At the tactical and operational levels of war, uncertainty is the product of the complex interaction between our forces, the environment, and an adaptive enemy. This is compounded by the chance inherent in operations conducted amidst danger and fatigue, or, in the terms of Carl von Clausewitz, friction and the fog of war.<sup>3</sup> In the 1990s we hoped to vanquish uncertainty through technology; today, we accept it as inevitable and attempt to develop leaders with an adaptive mindset capable of operating effectively in a chaotic environment.<sup>4</sup> Yet the mental processes of even the most agile leader only gain expression when executed by flesh and metal. Thus, we must also have versatile and capable soldiers, weapons, and organizations. This was evident in the early days of the Iraqi insurgency when there were not sufficient numbers of armored vehicles in the face of the widespread IED threat. Even adaptable leaders are unable to conjure anything but the most rudimentary material requirements. The institutional army must strive to anticipate such threats, but this will likely prove impossible, so more often we will have to produce versatile systems that can be used in unexpected ways, quickly modified, or even rapidly replaced with new systems when necessary. The Capstone Concept's emphasis on an adaptive mindset is the military equivalent of creating leaders like the 1980s television hero MacGyver, who was capable of fashioning anything from a pocket knife and duct tape. This is an excellent goal, but it should not stop us from trying to send our tactical MacGyvers to war with a full tool box and a Home Depot credit card, just in case.

But uncertainty is not merely a battlefield phenomenon; surprise is present even at the strategic level. In a February 2010 speech at West Point, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates quipped that our record in predicting conflict is perfect – we have always been wrong.<sup>5</sup> On

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September 10, 2001, for instance, most reasonable people would have dismissed the suggestion that an American invasion of Afghanistan was only weeks away. But it is not just that we usually fail to predict the time and place of a war, but we also fail to anticipate its course. This brings us back to Clausewitz. War is like a chameleon, he observed, forever changing its nature in unpredictable ways.<sup>6</sup> Like at the tactical level, this uncertainty can result from the actions of the enemy. But at the highest levels, uncertainty is also a product of the unpredictable interactions among rational policy calculations, irrational passions and hatreds unleashed by conflict, and the chance inherent in all human activities, particularly those at the scale of societies engaged in war. There are few better examples of this unpredictability than the war in Iraq. Unlike the Afghanistan case, the United States has rarely, if ever, been more ready for war. Since 1991, the military had made ready for another clash with Saddam Hussein, a preparation that yielded the stunningly successful campaign in March and April 2003. But even with auspicious start, the war soon changed into a very different conflict completely contrary to the expectations of those who ordered it.<sup>7</sup>

Dealing with these two different elements of strategic uncertainty requires two additional attributes of institutional adaptability. The first is the ability to react to strategic surprise. During the initial invasion of Afghanistan, special operations forces conducted exactly the kind of unconventional warfare mission for which they had been trained, equipped, and organized. The unexpected challenge was the location, which required a rapid effort to provide the basing, logistics, and command infrastructure to support operations. The second component is the ability to adapt doctrine, training, organizations, equipment, and manning over time as a conflict takes unexpected turns. In the case of Iraq, these adaptations included the development of

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counterinsurgency doctrine, the rapid equipment fielding initiative, and the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization (JIEDDO).

To summarize, an institutional strategy embracing uncertainty requires a climate that fosters adaptable leaders, supports them with equally versatile soldiers, units, and equipment, can rapidly shift operations to meet unforeseen crises, and adapts as the conflict changes. It would be difficult to create such a versatile organization with no constraints and boundless resources, but it is particularly hard in a time of austerity and within the framework of a democracy where accountability to civilian oversight often necessarily trumps effectiveness. Thus, for all practical purposes we must prepare for uncertainty largely with the processes and organizations that we have now.

This leads to the inescapable paradox of institutional adaptability: it must be established through bureaucratic means such as programs of instruction for professional schools, sets of requirements for weapons systems, five-year plans for budgets and programs, and protocols for accession, promotion, and assignments. It is like trying to paint the Mona Lisa by programming a computer with mathematical algorithms. While possible, the means are antithetical to the spirit of the ends. Even if we faced just one clearly defined strategic problem, it would be difficult for the tens of thousands of soldiers, civilians, and contractors who play a role in shaping and implementing these multiple processes, each coming from a difficult professional background and organizational vantage, to successfully translate such dry bureaucratic stuff into an adaptable force. To do so with no external reference other than the admonition to be ready for uncertainty (whatever that means) becomes a staggering task of institutional leadership.

The remainder of this essay will break this dilemma into three specific challenges before offering a suggestion for how to mitigate the problem of uncertainty. The first challenge of

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uncertainty is to develop a smart, useful, intelligible doctrine that enables operational adaptability. The second challenge is to articulate a strategy for allocating risk and resources in a way that fosters institutional adaptability. The third challenge provides a guiding principle for how the Army will organize itself without the benefit of a clearly defined enemy. All three challenges are essentially problems of how to communicate in the absence of a fixed point of reference. The proposal will helpfully at least alleviate that facet of the larger organizational problem of building adaptability.

## **1. Translating the idea of adaptability into smart, useful, intelligible doctrine**

In the evocative description of historian Roger Spiller, doctrine is an army thinking to itself about how it wants to fight.<sup>8</sup> Using this as a point of departure, the natural question is under what conditions do we tend to think most clearly? Arguably it is when faced with a specific problem rather than an abstraction. If true for individuals, it is almost certainly even more the case with armies, for it is difficult for a large group to collectively share the same understanding of an abstract position. For this reason, uncertainty poses a particularly difficult problem for the Army as it muses about the best way to win wars. This is likely the reason that historian Frederick Kagan contends that the only feasible method for an army to transform itself is to orient against a well-defined threat.<sup>9</sup> The weight of history certainly supports Kagan's position. Certainly, doctrine can remain applicable by confining itself only to general principles, but that runs counter to its official purpose of promoting "a common perspective from which to plan, train, and conduct military operations."<sup>10</sup> This common perspective requires a certain degree of specificity to be useful: generalities are unlikely to unify these activities when practiced on an institutional scale. Thus, doctrine must not just be smart, but useful as well.

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Specificity is also necessary to ensure effective communication across such a wide and diverse population. The Army is simply too big for complex abstractions; the message will be received only if made in clear, concrete terms.

Smart, useful, intelligible: that is a high standard, indeed. Although its Cold War origins make AirLand Battle the epitome of the same threat-based doctrine that Kagan alluded to, it was also arguably the most successful doctrine in American military history. Therefore, it offers some useful insights into the conditions necessary for rigorous institutional thought. The origins of AirLand Battle lay in the dark days of the 1970s, when the Army was beset with massive institutional problems after Vietnam and the transition to the All Volunteer Force faced the imposing Warsaw Pact armies in central Europe.<sup>11</sup> With the “Big Five” weapons still in the future, the broken Army of the 1970s was outnumbered, outgunned, and, most likely, outclassed. To make matters worse, the politics of coalition warfare further restricted the already limited operational options. General William DePuy, the brilliant, creative, and autocratic commander of Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), personally directed much of the effort to produce a doctrine capable of solving this problem, while revitalizing the Army in the process. The result was the 1976 edition of FM 100-5, *Operations*, commonly known as Active Defense. Despite the brilliance of DePuy and his small band of picked assistants, the doctrine was both unworkable and broadly despised throughout the Army. The pages of *Military Review* and other professional journals soon filled with pointed critiques of FM 100-5. This rejection owed much to DePuy’s overweening attempt to change organizational culture through doctrinal fiat.

Active Defense, however, was not a dead end, but an intellectual foundation. Donn Starry, one of DePuy’s principal lieutenants, went on to command V Corps in Germany before replacing DePuy at TRADOC. With the benefit of that additional experience and reflection, Starry

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initiated a new FM 100-5 that drew upon the significant thought that went into Active Defense and the criticism directed against it, as well as the legacy of aggressive combined arms maneuver during World War II, and vicarious experience gained from the Arab-Israeli wars. Most importantly, Starry sought a dialogue with the professional community, a course that he had unsuccessfully urged on DePuy during the development of Active Defense. The new doctrine of AirLand Battle — initially published as the 1982 FM 100-5 — was eagerly accepted by the Army. In concert with the “Big Five” and the improved tactical proficiency resulting from the training revolution — both DePuy legacies — AirLand Battle was devastatingly effective in Operation Desert Storm.

Returning to the initial observation that doctrine is an army’s conversation with itself, the case of AirLand Battle suggests that it must be a long discussion in order to be fruitful; well over a decade elapsed between the genesis of Active Defense and the final version of AirLand Battle in 1986. Furthermore, this discussion must be shared across the entire profession; no matter how talented, a writing group ensconced in TRADOC will not be able to envision the complex modern battlefield with sufficient granularity. Critique from the operational army is necessary to ensure rigor, while also easing acceptance.

Yet creating the conditions for this discourse is far harder now than during the Cold War. While AirLand Battle was not meant as a doctrine only for the defense of Germany, the Soviet threat provided a useful rubric against which concepts could be judged. It also provided an impetus for introspection, particularly for those stationed in Germany it was not some mere academic discussion. Those two elements are largely absent today. An abstract discussion is unlikely to generate sustained interest among an officer corps that, frankly, cares little for doctrine. Furthermore, the spirited dialogue that helped produce AirLand Battle is difficult to

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recreate, for there is no shared frame of reference to make discussion among different groups mutually intelligible. The defense of Germany was a professional *lingua franca* that allowed officers throughout the Army to understand and evaluate the concepts of others. Today, the term *wide area security* is bound to conjure any number of mental constructs. Baghdad in 2004? Quite a different experience than that in Basra, Kirkuk, or Mosul at the same time, or those same cities in 2007, or once again the same places in 2010, much less Kandahar or Kabul in any given period. To paraphrase George Bernard Shaw, the Army might well become an institution separated by a common doctrine. If so, the problem will be the inability to bridge the vast array of different experiences through which each reader filters and interprets the meaning of doctrine. Although we have an unusually battle-seasoned force, we are all prisoners of our own experiences, and these have hardly been uniform.

## **2. Articulating a vision for the allocation of resources that fosters adaptability**

As already noted, acknowledging the dangers of overconfident prediction is ultimately a negative realization; it identifies what not to do, but provides no positive guidance as to how the Army should be organized. This is not so critical for operational adaptability, which is rooted in a quality of mind. This was seen in Desert Storm, when an army trained for fighting Soviets in Germany found it quite easy to adjust to fighting Iraqis in the desert. But institutional adaptability is not so pliant. Institutional adaptability is far more a function of tangible resources: school capacity to train and educate soldiers; maneuver areas, simulators, and ranges for collective and live-firing training; and the many different types of vehicles necessary for an array of missions, each fleet with its own unique inventory of spare parts, auxiliary equipment, and maintenance facilities. Less apparent, but nonetheless real, is the finite amount of expertise

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in professional, tactical, technical, or cultural specialties. These factors all come together to produce the right mix of accessible units correctly manned and equipped. If they are not orchestrated correctly, a mindset will only go so far to overcome mistakes when the people, equipment, and training of a unit do not complement each other or contribute to the mission at hand.

The military refers to these interconnected components as DOTMLPF — doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities. While institutional adaptability is not synonymous with DOTMLPF, adaptability is likely to be constrained by whichever of those factors is most limiting. This complex interplay of factors was evident in the American mobilization for World War I, when doctrine and organization were largely in place due to an excellent school system, but the Army could not begin independent operations on a significant scale for over a year because it was not ready to train, equip, man, or base the influx of volunteers and draftees.<sup>12</sup> Even with that delay, weakness in some institutional components led to problems in others; for instance, the cumbersome “square” divisional structure was a direct result of the shortfall in trained commanders and staff officer, which did not allow for the creation of enough headquarters to allow smaller, more agile divisions.<sup>13</sup>

In a predictable world, it would be relatively simple to synchronize the components of DOTMLPF to avoid such problems and achieve both maximum effectiveness and efficiency. But in an uncertain world full of strategic surprise, finely tuned calculations are impossible. The obvious reaction to this problem is to favor generalists — whether organizations, equipment, or personnel. Yet in practice, this jack-of-all-trades principle extends only so far. There is no all-purpose unit, vehicle, or military specialty equally suited to all missions. Thus, reality demands allocating scarce resources against the most likely contingencies. Having come full circle from

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the intellectual realization that prediction is bound to lead us astray, but then also conceding that institutional choices must be made and justified on the basis of prediction (unless we adopt an explicit policy of actually trying to re-fight the last war, a poor choice), it would be easy to resign ourselves to muddling through and hoping for the best.

Indeed, this dilemma has no neat solution, but it can be managed through a strategy of relying upon prediction principally in those institutional areas where a mistake can be more easily rectified, while at the same time hedging against uncertainty in critical programs or slow-reacting functions. For instance, doctrine and training can be altered relatively quickly, so the Army can closely tailor those activities to the expected future. Less pliable factors like personnel end strength, equipment, and force structure should be handled more cautiously, although the Army increased troop levels, fielded niche capabilities, and reorganized its basic fighting organization in the midst of war over the last decade more successfully than many might have supposed possible. In the future, such changes can be made easier by ensuring that the processes to repeat these feats remain in place. At the other end of the spectrum, the “stickiest” factors require a generalist approach that seeks to preserve the broadest possible range of capabilities for the given resources, even if there is no immediately obvious demand. Examples of these areas are basing and facilities, personnel with specialized expertise (such as linguists), and materiel involving significant investment (such as small arms like the M-16/M4, ubiquitous vehicles like the HMMWV, or key platforms like the UH-60). Of course, this balancing of the present, the near future, and the long-term is nothing new. Confronted with a shrinking post-war budget, Secretary of War John C. Calhoun urged Congress to adopt an expansible army organization in 1820!<sup>14</sup>

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The novel element since the end of the Cold War has been that never before was the United States a global power with so many diverse commitments but without a clear strategic organizing principle. This requires the Army to go beyond simply making the hard decisions, but also to better articulate its process for allocating resources to achieve institutional adaptability. This communication is necessary to ensure that both internal and external audiences understand the principle underlying otherwise confusing policies. Soldiers will have greater confidence in the institution if they understand the rationale behind accepting risk in certain areas. Similarly, trust will be increased if the public understands this nuanced approach to a complex problem.

### **3. Expanding an operating concept into an organizing precept for the entire Army**

It is an unfortunate fact, but one that must be acknowledged, that human nature is the enemy of institutional adaptability. Ironically, some of the most dynamic, innovative leaders are the worst offenders. During a time of war these dedicated servants often go to great lengths to support warfighters. But what will happen during a long period of peace when the pressure is to cut and streamline processes? Because they constantly seek to improve their organizations, such leaders naturally try to do what they are doing today even better tomorrow. But what happens when tomorrow is completely different? These creative energies might be counterproductive if they lead to processes so finely-tuned that cannot withstand an unexpected change; history teaches that this shock will inevitably happen, so the question is not if, but when. The incentive to optimize to the routine conditions of peace rather than war is always present, but it becomes particularly hard to balance the present and the future when the latter is poorly defined.

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During the Cold War, the defense of Germany provided a focal point for the institutional army in much the same way as it did for the operating force. Our present systems provide a poor substitute for this readily understood context. Both the Department of Defense and the Army provide strategic, planning, and programming guidance in a number of documents.<sup>15</sup> Yet for all of these directives, both the current chief of staff of the Army and his immediate predecessor have commented upon the general sense among soldiers that the Army is adrift.<sup>16</sup> This might be partly due to the origin of our strategic processes in an era in which the larger context was so well understood as to require little in the way of formal elaboration.

This is no longer the case. Compounding this problem, the method of providing strategic direction relies (understandably) upon top-down processes. In complex organizations, directed change often goes awry in the midst of unpredictable and complex human interactions.<sup>17</sup> Adaptability is particularly hard to impose. But while dictates from the top are likely to fail, so too, as already noted, is bottom-up innovation without a common frame of reference more likely to lead toward improving routine operations rather than preparing for the unknown. This would seem to leave us helpless, stuck between two equally unworkable alternatives.

The answer lies somewhere in between in the form of a directed framework provided by senior leaders that allows a decentralized application at lower levels. The diversity of functions resident within the Army demands that flexibility be a product of bottom-up innovation generated by functional experts in their respective fields. Adaptability in acquisitions is likely to be something very different than adaptability in installation management. Yet this initiative must also have some guide if individual efforts are to cohere into something useful. Thus the Army needs an organizational precept, which by definition, is a general rule intended to regulate behavior or thought.<sup>18</sup> Like doctrine for the operating force, it must be general enough to be

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applicable in a number of settings, but specific enough to provide sufficient direction. Most importantly, it must be meaningful far down the chain of command, for while senior leaders will establish the conditions for adaptability, the bulk of the ideas on how to achieve it will come from below.

But what would such a precept look like? The central tenet is to accept risk in the most flexible functions where mistakes could be more easily made good and be more cautious in those institutional areas that are more difficult to change. The institution must set the conditions for this to be accomplished in a rigorous, accountable manner by providing subordinates with the analytical tools to account for strategic uncertainty. This quantification of the “unknown unknowns” would allow for informed decisions about the benefits and risk associated with pursuing efficiencies that might limit our ability to react to new conditions. These tools would not just also allow subordinates to effectively communicate to their higher headquarters the trade-offs between efficiencies and adaptability, but would also be the basis for making the same business case to the Department of Defense and Congress. This is in accord with the old maxim that only that which can be counted counts; the reality of efficiencies will throttle the dream of adaptability unless the latter becomes analytically comparable to more tangible considerations such as manpower and cost. Failure to do so will quickly produce an Army built to maintain garrison routine at the lowest possible cost but unable to react to the next crisis.

## **Clarifying Uncertainty: A Proposal**

The thread running through all three challenges is the difficulty of communication when the strategic context is uncertain. The problems of deciding how to fight, how to weigh the known and the unknown, how to best organize the Army for 2013, 2015, and 2025, are all

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difficult enough in themselves, but are impossible to solve if the various stakeholders are talking past each other due to differing understandings of the larger picture. In itself, clarifying uncertainty does not make an institution adaptable, but it is a necessary precursor in today's world.

One method to achieve this would be to borrow a technique from the early Naval War College, which used an “annual problem” – such as the defense of the Philippines against a Japanese attack – as the basis for that year's main wargame as well as all the subsidiary exercises and studies.<sup>19</sup> The modern variant would use selected scenario as the basis of training for all units not already assigned to a specific mission. The basis of each problem would be some on a generalized campaign, such as deterrence and defeat of a threatened attack by a regional power, forcible entry, or stability operations. The effort required to produce the necessary materials, particularly the necessary simulations packages, would likely make a two- or three- year cycle more realistic than iterations. But even with some longer interval, after a decade the collective series would have already begun to illustrate the diverse functions of the Army under a variety of different contexts.

These problems would be powerful tools for communication, allowing senior leaders to emphasize particular areas to both internal and external audiences. With effort, the release of these problems could become an eagerly anticipated by soldiers, policy pundits, think tanks, and the defense media. This strength of this system is that it conforms with one of the basic rules of effective communication: “Prefer the specific to the general, the definite to the vague, the concrete to the abstract.”<sup>20</sup>

Additionally, the simultaneous use of the same problem throughout the Army would provide a common reference point for rigorous professional discussion. Much as the defense of

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Germany provided the shared context enabling a discourse between the field and TRADOC during the development of AirLand Battle, each problem would serve the same function. The Army would clearly articulate its expectations for operations, and these expectations, in turn, could be validated and refined by the practitioners who are most capable of identifying practical shortfalls in doctrine, training, and organization.

At the same time, problems covering an entire campaign would bind the disparate portions of the Army by giving leaders at all levels a better picture of how their units fit into the bigger picture. This would also channel professional development along paths selected by Army leaders. Soldiers throughout the Army would soon be discussing how the same problem related to their specific unit or specialty. Imagine a brigade executive officer conducting staff training, a branch proponent starting a thread on a professional website, and a captain's career course small group, all discussing the same scenario. As soldiers moved between units or the institutional army, they would see the same problem from a different vantage.

Finally, the problems would provide purpose and reinforce professional interest through novelty. Imagine the excitement of a second lieutenant reading his or her first problem, imaging the role of one tiny platoon in such a big endeavor. If each installment achieved nothing else than to prompt a flurry of professional debate on a topic selected by Army leadership, then some good would have been accomplished.

Aside from the significant effort that would go into these products, there are several obvious risks inherent to this approach. The political hazards of using real world adversaries or thinly disguised surrogates would require generalized scenarios which even then might inadvertently provide potential foes with insights into our plans, methods, and vulnerabilities. Similarly, there is a risk of angering multinational, interagency, and joint partners. These

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considerations would obviously require some self-censorship in order to avoid needless self-inflicted damage. Yet even with the most careful discretion, these problems would be a lightning rod for critics who would inevitably seize upon them as a means to attack Army initiatives, programs, and resources. The potential for embarrassment and hard questions would compel the Army to carefully consider each problem, but that, of course, is precisely the point. The benefits might not outweigh the costs, but this system should not be rejected solely from fear of the consequences that would follow a forthright explanation of the Army's contributions to national security. Such fear of transparency would indicate a terrible professional and intellectual bankruptcy.

## **Conclusion: Beating the Odds**

Without minimizing the complexity or magnitude of today's challenges, it is important to maintain perspective. The next decade will bring lean budgets, but in peacetime the Army has never had sufficient resources to avoid significant risk, even during the Cold War.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the problem of allocating resources to meet an uncertain future is familiar, differing from the past only in terms of degree and detail. "Cold War system" has become an epithet, but most of these supposed anachronisms are the basis for an unprecedented ability to allocate resources among global operations against multiple, simultaneous threats. These systems, albeit sometimes maddeningly bureaucratic, are not fatally flawed. As always they will work well in the presence of good leadership and suffer in its absence. The new strategic context is different only in that it adds the requirement for leaders to provide the framework for making smart choices about the future in the absence of a single focal point. If this is done, whether through the "annual problem" or some other method, our problems are inherently manageable.

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<sup>1</sup> For a critical survey of the revolution in military affairs literature, see Steven Metz and James Kievit, *Strategy and Revolution in Military Affairs: From Theory to Policy* (Carlisle, Pa.: Strategic Studies Institute, 1995); also, Frederick W. Kagan, *Finding the Target: The Transformation of American Military Policy* (New York: Encounter Books, 2006), 166-175.

<sup>2</sup> TRADOC Pam 525-3-0, *The Army Capstone Concept, Operational Adaptability: Operating under Conditions of Uncertainty and Complexity in an Era of Persistent Conflict*, 21 December 2009, 6. Although this essay focuses on the Army, it is entirely consistent with joint doctrine as expressed in Department of Defense, *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations, version 3.0*, 15 January 2009. Similarly, Marine General James N. Mattis, while commanding JFCOM, declared, "Acknowledging the unpredictability of war is fundamental to our view of future conflict." Mattis memorandum, "USJFCOM Commander's Guidance for Effects-Based Operations," 14 August 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Clausewitz defined and described friction in book I, chapter 7 of *On War*, but he identified several other of what we would now call tactical and operational factors that lead to uncertainty in chapters 4-6. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, 1<sup>st</sup> paperback (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989).

<sup>4</sup> The Capstone Concept describes operational adaptability as a mindset in leaders who "possess the ability and willingness to make rapid adjustments according to the situation." TRADOC Pam 525-3-0, *Army Capstone Concept*, i.

<sup>5</sup> Robert M. Gates, 25 February 2011 speech, West Point, NY (<http://www.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1539>, accessed 15 July 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

<sup>7</sup> There is no shortage of books on this subject, but one of the most popular is Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: Penguin Press, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Discussion with author, 21 August 2007.

<sup>9</sup> Kagan, *Finding the Target*, 280.

<sup>10</sup> *JP-1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, 2 May 2007 incorporating change 1, 20 March 2009, ix.

<sup>11</sup> The following account is taken from Paul J. Herbert, *Deciding What Has to Be Done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5, Operations*, Leavenworth Paper #16 (Fort Leavenworth, Ks.: CSI, 1988); John J. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine, 1973-1982*, TRADOC Historical Monograph Series (Fort Monroe, Va.; TRADOC Historical Office, 1984); Richard M. Swain, "AirLand Battle," in *Camp Colt to Desert Storm: The History of U.S. Armored Forces*, ed. George F. Hofmann and Donn A. Stary (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 360-402.

<sup>12</sup> Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The American Military Experience in World War I* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), ch 2-3; James E. Hewes, *From Root to McNamara: Army Organization and Administration, 1900-1963*, Special Studies (Center of Military History) (Washington: Center of Military History U.S. Army: for sale by the Supt. of Docs. U.S. Govt. Print. Off., 1975), 21-41.

<sup>13</sup> Edward M. Coffman, *The Regulars: The American Army, 1898-1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), 203-213.

<sup>14</sup> John C. Calhoun, "On Reduction of the Army, Communicated to the House of Representatives, December 12th, 1820," in *Reports and Public Letters of John C. Calhoun, Vol. V*, ed. Richard C. Crallé, *The Works of John C. Calhoun* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1855), V:90.

<sup>15</sup> These documents include Guidance for the Employment of the Force, Defense Planning and Programming Guidance, and the Army Plan.

<sup>16</sup> Martin E. Dempsey, "CSA Remarks to AUSA Institute of Land Warfare breakfast," 5 May 2011; Raymond T. Odierno, "Prevent, Shape, Win," 12 December 2011, <http://armylive.dodlive.mil/index.php/2011/12/prevent-shape-win>, (accessed 14 Dec 11).

<sup>17</sup> An excellent study of the unintended consequences of centrally managed plans is James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*, Yale Agrarian Series (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> *The New American Oxford Dictionary*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1333.

<sup>19</sup> Ronald Spector, *Professors of War: The Naval War College and the Development of the Naval Profession* (Newport, R.I.; Naval War College Press, 1977), 71-73.

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<sup>20</sup> William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: Longman, 1979), 21.

<sup>21</sup> Aaron Friedberg provides an excellent summary of the manner by which ideology, political structures and pressures prevented the United States from applying the same level of resources to military preparations as the Soviet Union in the Cold War. While Friedberg notes that this anti-statist impulse was ultimately beneficial because it prevented the United States from a bankrupting build-up, it nonetheless led to significant periods when there was a dangerous mismatch between means and ends in American foreign policy. Aaron L. Friedberg, *In the Shadow of the Garrison State: America's Anti-Statism and Its Cold War Grand Strategy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

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## **Iraq & Afghanistan:**

### **Comparing the Conditions for Transition from U.S. Military to Civilian-led Efforts<sup>1</sup>**

**By Brian Groves**

The transition from an American military dominated presence in Afghanistan, to one in which the State Department leads the U.S. presence and Afghans take leadership of and have sovereignty over their own security, will not precipitate a decline in violence comparable to that experienced in Iraq. Unlike in Iraq, where the primary cause of the violence was the American military presence, in Afghanistan the main driver is a vie for control of the national government in Kabul.

The Afghan Taliban still purports to be the legitimate rulers of Afghanistan, a claim that Ba'ath party elements never credibly made. After their removal from power during the American led invasion in 2001, the Taliban established a government in exile based across the border in Quetta, Pakistan. In addition, they have since developed a shadow government across much of Afghanistan, especially in the southern and eastern portions of the country. While not recognized internationally and clearly not in control of the capital, the Taliban has consistently exercised significant influence over large portions of the country. In some cases Taliban elements control people and government actions directly, while in other areas, like in Eastern Afghanistan, they work indirectly through surrogates such as the Haqqani network. Because of these dynamics, the reason for the Afghan Taliban to fight will still exist when the U.S. military leaves. And, this will be true regardless of exactly how and when the drawdown occurs, and whether a residual American military presence remains to continue training Afghan National

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Security Forces post 2014. This is different than in Iraq where certain enemy elements, such as the Sadrists, supported the Iraqi government.

Furthermore, the transition will be more challenging than the one in Iraq due to a wide range of factors both internal to Afghanistan and unique to its region. The regional dynamics, security situation, governance considerations, American and Afghan disputes and blunders, terrain and logistical factors all contribute to an environment even more complex and less likely to succeed than faced in Iraq. Meanwhile, when compared with the corresponding levels in Iraq, Afghanistan's ethnic composition and greater levels of international support for the counterterrorism and nation-building efforts there offer limited hopes for success.

## **Complicated Dynamics:**

Regional dynamics and the resulting security concerns are the first of the factors complicating the situation in Afghanistan. The sanctuary afforded to Afghan Taliban, Haqqani network, Al Qaeda, and other enemy elements in the border regions of Pakistan allow senior enemy leadership to control their rate of attrition—despite the immense efforts undertaken by American “surge” troops across the southern, and to a lesser extent the eastern regions of Afghanistan. Renowned terrorism and counterterrorism expert Bruce Hoffman pointed out that the recently released bin Laden letters, captured by the Seals that killed him in May 2011, indicate that the Al Qaeda leader was more concerned about Pakistani floods hindering Al Qaeda operatives in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), than he was about interference from the Pakistani intelligence or military apparatus. This is disconcerting and suggests either that Pakistan does not recognize the magnitude of the threat it faces from Al Qaeda, or that it is unwilling or unable to actively engage the threat. The fact that President Obama has more than

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quadrupled U.S. drone strikes—many of which occur inside Pakistan—from the rate established by his predecessor, supports this assertion. Along with the uncoordinated Seal raid against Osama bin Laden that took place close to the Pakistani capital of Islamabad, and the November 2011 fratricide incident, these drone strikes have worsened already rocky relations with Pakistan.

These incidents have also increased the domestic unrest and instability that is unfortunately a consistent dimension of the ebbs and flows of Pakistani politics. At times, events have called its regime's future into question, as well as its control of the state's nuclear weapons. Almost always, challenging dynamics such as these have regional implications, affecting more than Pakistan's bilateral relationship with the U.S. The viability of NATO supply lines through Pakistan, its operations in Afghanistan, and tensions between India and Pakistan are three areas that have been adversely impacted.

On its other flank, Afghanistan's western neighbor, Iran, has been playing both sides of the Afghan conflict for years, betting on both "red and black" in its attempts to ensure enduring influence regardless of the outcome. Iran, however, has restrained its meddling in Afghanistan, providing financial support to sides and limited weapons and training, rather than the robust training patterns and "game changer" weapons that it did in Iraq.

It remains unclear that International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) efforts are truly turning the tide. Senator Dianne Feinstein and Representative Mike Rogers, the respective Chairmen of the Senate and House intelligence committees, recently argued that the Afghan Taliban is stronger today than it was before the surge. While I cannot, from my current position, provide quantifiable proof to confirm or contradict this assertion, it was striking to me how little progress had been made between my two trips to Afghanistan in 2009 and 2011 in terms of reducing the number of security incidents and the overall threat.<sup>2</sup> This is despite the following

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immense effort during that period: U.S. military surge, that of our NATO partners, increased drone strikes, significant successes on kill/capture missions, a civilian surge aimed at furthering the governance and development pillars of the ISAF effort, successful Afghan Local Police work, robust Village Stability Operations by U.S. Special Forces in key towns aimed at separating local Afghans from the insurgency and connecting them to district governments, and a Afghan National Security Force (ANSF) that now measures approximately 300,000 strong.

In addition to the Pakistani safe haven, rampant corruption was the other of the two largest concerns universally mentioned by those with whom my group of West Point professors talked. In 2009, a survey of the Afghan people found corruption to beat out issues like security, jobs, and future prospects as their number one concern. In 2011, multiple individuals reported that ten million dollars a day was leaving the country via corrupt politicians and tribal leaders moving U.S. and international assistance money to offshore accounts. Further first hand reports indicated that foreign assistance money and non-governmental aid organizations contributed to the problem. Instead of acting based on altruistic motives, pursuit of lucrative opportunities was the prime driver, with projects lacking common sense and providing too little too late, limited results, all with no accountability in place to provide incentives for change.

These anecdotal stories are in addition to the perennial complaints from Americans and ISAF members about the levels of corruption throughout most levels of the Afghan government, including the late Ahmed Wali Karzai and his brother, President Hamid Karzai. Recognizing that there are differing standards in this arena between our countries, it is significant that the issue registers with the Afghan people to the extent that it does. Afghans accept that warlords and politicians will take a cut of assistance money, and that safe passage fees will be charged to transit across certain roads. What they do not accept is that the fee amounts and collection

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locations will be unpredictable. This was not the case under Taliban rule, but it is in many areas today.

American and Afghan disputes and blunders are a third issue complicating endeavors undertaken by ISAF and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). Disputes between the U.S. and Afghans regarding the timeline for transfer of detention facilities to Afghan control, night raids—seen by Afghans as invasive and unacceptable, the flailing Taliban reconciliation talks, and anemic insurgent reintegration flows all have proven problematic and continue to present a challenging environment for cooperation. While small in comparison to the positive efforts, American mistakes, unfortunately, are much more visible, and have occurred in rapid succession of late. They include firefights or bombing raids that result in civilian casualties, the Marines urinating on dead Afghans, the burning of the Korans, and SSG Bales' alleged murder of 17 innocent Afghan civilians. Afghani inability to adequately vet the ANSF and collaboration with Taliban affiliated groups has resulted in 80 “Green on Blue” incidents since 2007. Three fourths of these events have taken place in the last two years, including inside the Ministry of the Interior—one of the GIROA ministries that should be among the most well guarded and with whom American officials should have the best relationships.

Terrain and logistical factors constitute a fourth pressure point. Political scientists have recognized that insurgencies in mountainous terrain generally last longer than those in other types of terrain. Afghanistan's mountainous terrain has born this out during the Mujahedeen's jihad against the Soviets, and again in the Taliban's fight against the U.S. and GIROA. American military commanders have a hard time controlling the ground in their area of operations. In some of the most mountainous areas, their troops cannot control more than a mile on either side of the road networks.

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The mountains also make logistical resupply significantly harder. Some material does come in by air, but the treacherous mountains, and the fact that Afghanistan is a land locked country, make ISAF commanders dependent upon cooperation from Afghanistan's neighbors for most of the supplies that arrive via ground lines of communication. Since the November fratricide incident, Pakistan has shut down the ability of NATO units to transport supplies via Pakistani ports, requiring an alternative for the 80 percent of supplies and 40 percent of fuel that had come through Pakistan. The northern supply route is sufficient for now, but does not allow for much political wiggle room should relationships sour with Russia, Kazakhstan, or Uzbekistan. Thus, in what amounts to an important initial step, the Pakistanis today set a meeting for next week to discuss reopening the supply lines, possibly ahead of the NATO summit in Chicago later this month.

Each of the previously mentioned factors make the situation in Afghanistan more complex than it was in Iraq,<sup>3</sup> thereby making transition planning and execution all the more challenging.

## **Reason for Hope?:**

However, Afghanistan's ethnic composition and greater levels of international support for the counterterrorism and nation-building efforts there, than were seen in Iraq, offer limited hopes for success. Examined in a vacuum, greater ethnic fragmentation in Afghanistan than in Iraq provides an environment with greater potential for success. Afghanis have not demonstrated any tendency to regress into the type of sectarian conflict<sup>4</sup> that Iraq experienced from 2004-2008. This is due to the greater number of ethnic groups living in the country, rendering mobilization along purely ethnic lines more difficult. It is also due to historical and political differences, and

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is a minor plus compared to the ethnic tensions in Iraq that still occasionally grab headlines. General Allen, the current ISAF commander, asserts that the higher levels of international support for efforts in Afghanistan is another significant difference from that in Iraq, and will ease the transition there—from an American perspective—compared to conducting the transition unilaterally in Iraq. However, international financial and troop support, despite what may be agreed upon now and announced at the NATO summit in Chicago or afterwards, may ebb due to domestic politics and continuing global financial pressures over the next few years.

## **Significance & Conclusion:**

The difference in enemy orientation and capability between Iraq and Afghanistan means that diplomats or aid organizations, particularly any seen by the Taliban as directly buttressing Afghan government institutions, may remain targets in the post 2014 environment to a degree greater than experienced in Iraq. More broadly, if robust American and international activity are not producing effective results, or even de-complicating some of the variables involved, it may be time to recalibrate what U.S. objectives should be—what the true national security imperatives are, and what is required to reach them.

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the U.S. Department of State, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Army.

<sup>2</sup> As the Deputy of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, I traveled across Afghanistan in the summers of 2009 and 2011. On these trips I talked with elite members of the military, intelligence, command, and Embassy circles, to include General McChrystal and Ambassador Eikenberry in 2009 and General Petraeus in 2011.

<sup>3</sup> This assertion is arguable in terms of the training and weapons provided by Iran (worse in Iraq), but not in terms of my argument regarding safe haven in Pakistan, which is far worse than any sanctuary for fighters in Iraq. Regarding blunders, I recognize that the U.S. made egregious mistakes in Iraq, namely at Abu Ghraib. This individual event was arguably worse than any singular event in Afghanistan—at least until the SSG Bales rampage—but the net effect of the disputes between our governments and the mistakes made has taken a greater toll on the American relationship with GIROA than similar issues did with the Government of Iraq. Most importantly, they have played a more significant role in Afghanistan in hindering cooperation and the realization of objectives, or even of measurable progress—beyond a flurry of increased ISAF and Afghan activity.

<sup>4</sup> And eventually border-line civil war.

# **BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL PLANNING: BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

By Major Aaron Bazin

*"Plans are worthless, but planning is everything."* - President Dwight D. Eisenhower<sup>1</sup>

*"There is at least one thing worse than fighting with allies – And that is to fight without them" -*  
Sir Winston S. Churchill<sup>2</sup>

Bilateral and multilateral planning is a valuable activity that, if done well, strengthens the military-to-military relationship and operational synergy between nations. The combatant commander sits at the intersection of policy, strategy, and military operations, and is charged the daunting task of balancing ends, ways, means, and risk with reality of what is truly possible; bridging theory and practice. Concept plans are one mechanism at their disposal to develop prudent responses to possible contingencies, which, if they came to pass, would severely damage to national interests and the interests of global partners. The development of a U.S.-only concept plan can take many months, if not years to fully complete. When the commander decides to expand the planning aperture to the bilateral or multilateral level, the complexities increase exponentially. A bilateral and multilateral plan is by far the most difficult to develop because of the numerous stakeholders involved and their many interests. However, if planners able to form a comprehensive military-to-military plan with a partner nation that clarifies a common mission and intent, the benefits far outweigh the costs. This article details why bilateral and multilateral

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planning is important, the legal and doctrinal context, an applied process for planning, and major lessons learned at the combatant command level.

## **WHY CONDUCT BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL PLANNING?**

Overall, bilateral or multilateral planning is a process of structured communication between partners focused on one tangible output; a written and mutually agreed to plan that provides decision makers options to address shared interests. The most obvious benefit is that if the defined trigger event ever happened, each nation's military is better postured to address the issue more effectively than if there was no previous coordination at all. As complex phenomena, rarely do international crises unfold exactly as predicted. When a crisis occurs, and time is of the essence, with a plan in place, there is a baseline from which to diverge, and maximizing operational flexibility. Overall, interoperability and efficiency improve in all joint functional areas: command and control, intelligence, fires, movement and maneuver, protection, and sustainment. Beneath the surface-level, bilateral and multilateral planning accomplishes much more.

From the perspective of operational art and design, involving an international partner in a deep and deliberate planning discussion to address mutual interests has many positive long-term benefits. During planning, planners synchronize critical elements of operational design with partners such as termination criteria, the military end state, objective, effects, the center of gravity, and operational lines of effort. Through the planning process, the commander's ability to anticipate is maximized as possible enemy scenarios are explored and discussed. Perhaps most importantly, the commander's operational reach is extended as issues such as host nation access, basing construction, and over-flight permissions are resolved.

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As a confidence-building measure, the bilateral and multilateral planning process facilitates deliberate communication and allows parties to address and dispel preconceived assumptions. Through multiple strategic communication engagements and interventions over a period of months as shared problem identification and solving occurs, the process strengthens the military-to-military relationship substantially. For example, pure intelligence or information sharing only shares reporting and data, leaving the deeper analysis and “so what” untouched. Through the use of intelligence to drive planning, militaries develop a shared understanding of the threat that pulls together analysis and insights from unilateral intelligence sources that countries would not have had access to otherwise. Even though countries will probably never share specific sources, methods, and means, the reliability and validity of each party’s individual enemy assessment improves from including varied perspectives.

The synergy that planning builds leads to a more focused security assistance and security cooperation program as well. The combatant command and the partner nation can then better align Foreign Military Sales and Foreign Military Finance cases to address gaps and concerns identified during planning. This prevents chasing the newest bright shiny object just because a country wants the *wasta*<sup>3</sup> of having the best equipment (or if the U.S. military wants accolades for providing it). In addition, with a solid plan in place, commanders can better focus bilateral and multilateral training exercises on exercising the capabilities needed for a potential concept plans not just purely hypothetical or generic scenarios. Overall, bilateral and multilateral planning leads to better-informed decisions at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels, and, sets the stage for a combatant commander to maximize effectiveness and operational synergy of any multinational operation.

## **LEGAL AND DOCTRINAL FOUNDATIONS**

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Title 22 of the U.S. code describes the legal basis for foreign relations and intercourse, and, it is important to note that prudent planning between military commanders and not an official treaty or a commitment of U.S. forces. Title 10, Section 164 of the U.S. Code describes the combatant command powers and duties as: (a) authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations, joint training, and logistics; (b) prescribing the chain of command; (c) organizing forces; (d) employing forces; (e) assigning command functions; and (f) coordinating administration and support.<sup>4</sup> Department of Defense definition of command includes responsibility for “planning the employment of, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions.”<sup>5</sup> Just as with any military contingency plan, for bilateral and multilateral planning, civilian leadership retains the authority to put the plan into execution. As such, to begin the planning process, each country’s civilian leadership must grant the requisite authorities to their military representatives.

Joint doctrine defines the term “combined” as, “between two or more forces or agencies of two or more allies.”<sup>6</sup> However, the commander, based on his or her assessment of the operational environment, may decide to clarify the type of plan required and use a more specific term to describe the purpose and context of the plan. One of the reasons a commander could choose to do this is if there are classified unilateral plans that the command is not able to share. A commander can choose to develop a contextually specific derivative plan to address concerns that overlap with one or more partners while retaining the integrity of a comprehensive unilateral operational design. In addition, because this operational design may employ a parallel instead of combined mission command structure, the planning team should use the term “bilateral” or “multilateral” instead of “combined” to specify the exact context of the effort and avoid

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confusion throughout the planning process. If this is the commander's intent for the plan, it is critical that planners make this distinction early in the process.

Typically, one country will officially ask another in writing to begin bilateral or multilateral planning for a specific contingency. For the U.S., this official request letter is normally routed through the senior defense official in-country to the combatant command for action. The staff then develops draft terms of reference for the planning effort that define the lateral limits and red lines of what planners can and should discuss. Typically, the Combatant Command submits these to the Office of Secretary of Defense for Policy for interagency modification and approval. In addition, depending on the political circumstances and context, the State Department or the Department of Defense lawyers may require a final legal review of the plan before signature. This entire process can take weeks or months depending on the severity of the situation and degree of political necessity and emphasis. Once the appropriate authorities have approved the Terms of Reference, planning can commence, but this is just the beginning step in what is often a very complex process.

## **AN APPLIED PROCESS FOR BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL PLANNING**

After requisite meetings with the embassy, the first meeting between nations is perhaps the single most critical event as it sets the tone for future discussions and future consensus. Often, the desired end product of these meetings is an agreed to set of mission analysis slides or signed Letter of Intent that outlines the shared way ahead. Regardless of the formality of desired output, the first topic planners should discuss is the development of a shared problem statement. Without a clear and concise problem statement, discussions could rapidly devolve into areas that are distracting, irrelevant, or unproductive. Joint Publication 5-0 provides the basic structure as discussion progress through mission analysis to scope the problem. Facts, assumptions,

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## **AN APPLIED PROCESS FOR BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL PLANNING**

- **Official Request**
- **Terms of Reference Development**
- **Approval of the Terms of Reference**
- **Discussions with the U.S. Country Team**
- **Initial Military-to-Military Discussions**
  - **Problem Definition**
  - **Mission Analysis**
  - **Development of a Shared Way Ahead**
- **Course of Action Development**
- **Plan Drafting and Staffing**
- **Line-by-line Review**
- **Plan Signature**

operational limitations, mission statement development, and other critical mission analysis topics all will yield valuable discussions and serve to build a shared consensus and help refine the operational vision. Countries should present each other with their intelligence picture of the enemy situation so that they can see what each other see in context. These briefings are not simply a data exchange of numerous files or day long briefings, but a brief overview of what is known, unknown, and what the analysts think will happen. At the conclusion of the first session, at a minimum, all parties should agree to a clear way ahead for future discussions and general norms of the process.

Course of action development is the next step in the process where planners discuss locations, forces, and employment options. As the combatant command level, it is important to involve representatives from service components. Involving them in the process and getting their buy-in early is critical because of their subject matter expertise and the eventual requirement to staff the plan through each headquarters. The most important part of this discussion is the combined mission, combined commander's intent, operational design, and command and control structure. In addition,

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planners should agree to a phasing construct along with what support each party will provide phase and what tasks they will accomplish. If course of action development is done correctly, each party will have an understanding of what each will do, how they are doing it, along with a good idea of each other will not do as well.

Next, in the process is the actual drafting of the plan. Up until this point, most of the discussion has been guided by viewing slides, rewording, and agreeing to the final product. The challenge in this step is to fill in the gaps and draft the words that convey the correct meaning and support the ideas and concepts agreed to in the slides. Once this first draft is complete, planners should staff the plan through all of the important stakeholders at the general officer level and other nations concerned. Once stakeholders have made feedback and comments and planner have made changes accordingly, a final copy of the plan is prepared for review with highlights the clearly show what substantive changes were made to the plan and where they were made.

Perhaps the most time consuming and tedious part of the modified planning process discussed here is the line-by-line review of the plan with the other nation(s) and key stakeholders. The latest version of the plan is projected on a large screen for all to see and then each line is scrutinized and finalized with each party discussing and agreeing to each line of the plan. This step may appear unnecessary but is vitally important and planners should not omit this step. First, although each staff section, command, and country has looked at a version of the plan, they have not seen the version with all of the comments collated. Planners should highlight each major change, and each change either accepted or rejected by consensus. At this point those leading the discussion must actively listen to the others in the room and display acceptance, trust, realness, and empathetic understanding. Compromise is at the core of bilateral and multilateral

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planning, and to do it successfully, planners must be able to put aside their own pet interests and build true consensus.

If a significant issue arises, the parties in disagreement can hold a brief session away from the group to resolve their issue. Overall, these review sessions normally take two or more days to conduct and can run into late hours of the night. It is important that consensus is reached and the parties agree on the final wording of the plan. As a last resort, if there is an intractable issue that planners simply solved at this session, planners should identify the issue and address it later during annex development or another appropriate forum. Following approval of the final draft, the plan is prepared for signature, and simultaneously cosigned by the senior military commanders or their designated representatives. All parties keep a final copy of the signed plan and control the dissemination as per their national disclosure policies.

This process is not easy, nor should it be if planners are to address the difficult and contentious issues and resolve them adequately. As with any plan, at the point of time that the plan is signed marks the apex of its validity. As time passes, leaders change positions and events unfold, the plan slowly becomes less and less applicable and relevant. Just how long the shelf life of the plan is determined by how volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous the operational environment becomes and how engaged the parties stay with each other. Normally, following plan signature the countries agree to review for major changes either annually, biannually, or as required. Depending on how engaged the countries choose to be, the signatories can schedule follow on conferences to complete annex development or table-top exercises.

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## **LESSONS LEARNED**

### **Involve U.S. Embassy and Other Interagency Stakeholders Early and Often**

From the U.S. planning perspective, the Ambassador and the Senior Defense Official are two of the most important stakeholders in any country. As the Ambassador is the official representative of the President, and the Senior Defense Official is the official representative of

**LESSONS LEARNED**

- **Involve U.S. Embassy and Other Interagency Stakeholders Early and Often**
- **Form a Comprehensive Team**
- **Choose Your Words Carefully**
- **Understand and Respect Stakeholder Red Lines**

the combatant commander; each plays a critical piece in synchronizing the planning effort within the larger interagency whole-of-government approach at the grass roots level inside a country. Before the first meetings with the host nation, it is critical to brief the country team on the planning effort and receive their guidance on how they would like to proceed. In addition, planners should

involve embassy representatives at every planning session with the host nation. If certain functions such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief are topics that planners will discuss, it is critical to get the appropriate USAID, Department of State representatives, or other stakeholders in the room to participate as well.

### **Form a Comprehensive Team**

Planners cannot plan in a vacuum, and, it is important that the U.S. planning team that have the requisite subject matter experts present to discuss specific details if they are required to do so. Planners should give the full complement of staff and special staff the opportunity to participate. This includes, but is not limited to, the staff representatives from the following

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areas: personnel, intelligence, operations, security cooperation, counter-WMD, communications, exercises, assessments, legal, and strategic communication. The planning team should include the service components from the Air Force, Navy, Army, and Marines as they also play a key role as well as force providers and possible executors of the plan. Based on the scope of the planning effort, planners may need to involve other stakeholders from the Joint Staff, Office of Secretary of Defense, or other combatant commands. A team of specialized subject-matter experts can cover the full scope of topics and leave no fact unsaid or assumption undiscovered. In addition, if there is an area such as strategic communication that needs special focus, a group can break-out to address the topic in more detail.

## **Choose Your Words Carefully**

In dealing with other nations, avoiding U.S. acronyms and jargon is critical. Acronyms allow people to communicate detailed concepts more concisely, but are only effective if everyone in the audience is familiar with the acronym. If acronyms are used, planners should provide a full list so that each nation understands what all of the parties discuss and agreed to. In U.S. planning, it is common that long discussions are held over word usage. When dealing with non-native English speakers, it is important that the wording used is deliberate and is as concise as possible. Since the final translate the final document and conveying meaning in as few words as simply as possible makes the translator's job easier. If the overall objective of planning is to communicate, then planners should carefully tailor the communication style to the audience to convey the intended meaning. Using complex acronyms and flowery language only serves to muddy the waters and increases the chances that one or more persons in the audience will not catch the intended meaning.

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## **Understand and Respect Stakeholder Red Lines**

When planning with one or more partner nations, it is important to understand that each nation comes with planning and policy restrictions. Instead of discovering these red lines on the fly, identifying them early helps manage expectations and define the planning parameters. In some militaries, power and decision making authority is pushed down to the lowest level. In other militaries, power is consolidated at the top and loyalty to one's superior is paramount over anything else. What this means for planning is that some planners may have wide latitude to agree to different activities and some may not. The key is to find the right balance between what is possible and what each nation's representative is not empowered to decide. Here, planners must display professionalism, tact, and have realistic expectations. Planners obtain consensus through prudent compromise, and, just because a way of doing this is different than doctrine or personnel experience, it does not mean that it is wrong. As long as the rationale behind the change is sound and fits within the context of the situation, a planner should feel empowered to go outside the norm. However, inherent in this is the planner's ability to understand their own policy parameters and commander's guidance so that they can operate within it. If new guidance is required, a planner should seek that guidance so to not overstep one's own redlines by accident.

## **Remain Open to Different Ways of Doing Things**

A planner can reasonable assume that each country comes to the planning table with their own unique level of doctrine and a different way of looking at the problem. Each nation's way of doing things is special, and, instead of forcing U.S. doctrine on partners, it is critical that everyone at the table strive to understand and work within existing norms. Where norms and perceptions differ and are incompatible, then disagreements and interoperability problems can arise. Planners should not avoid these tough topics put off, and should take them head on. Only

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once everyone has stated their position can planners reach compromise. Avoiding a subject just because it is uncomfortable only leaves room for more misunderstanding and error. This is where the art of bilateral and multilateral planning comes to the forefront over the science. Communication, confidence, and compromise allow planners to overcome these obstacles and concrete relationships allowed to take root. One cannot build strong military-to-military relationships overnight and small gains in trust build momentum over time and become a powerful personal and professional connection.

## **CONCLUSION**

This article discussed in detail why bilateral and multilateral planning is important, what the legal and doctrinal foundation is to conduct planning of this type, a practical process, and major lessons learned at the combatant command level. Even the most comprehensive plan is only a point of departure for a commander to employ allocated forces during times of crisis or contingency. The enemy always gets a vote, and, the dynamics of the operational environment could quickly invalidate the best-laid plan. However, waiting to make plans until a contingency emerges cedes the initiative to the enemy and does not take into account valuable preparation of the environment activities that can occur during peacetime. The time to resolve issues over basing, over flight, and access is before a crises happens. Engaging early and often with partners or potential partners is invaluable, and planning provides a unique value that high-level meetings and other joint activities simply cannot.

Bilateral and multilateral planning is valuable because it provides the commanders an excellent a medium for strategic communication, exercises operational art, and shapes the operational environment. The heart of military-to-military relationship building is that, despite one's country of origin, there are universal themes in military service typified by personal

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sacrifice, dedication to duty, and service to the higher calling of one's nation. Upon this small connection between military professionals, a bond forms that gives "grunt" diplomacy the capacity to succeed when all other forms of diplomacy fail. Planning is simply a catalyst to make this connection happen and grow it through substantive discussions concerning real issues. Overall, the hope of bilateral and multilateral planning is that during times of crises, nations are one small-step closer toward unified action, operational synergy, and an effective defense of mutual interests.

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<sup>1</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower. Speech to the National Defense Executive Reserve Conference in Washington, D.C., (November 14, 1957).

<sup>2</sup> Economist Magazine, "On target: Robert Gates's parting shot exposes Europe's military failings." Accessed June 29, 2012 from <http://www.economist.com/node/18836734>.

<sup>3</sup> Wasta is a commonly used Iraqi term synonymous with pride.

<sup>4</sup> Title 10 U.S. Code, Section 164 - Commanders of Combatant Commands: Assignment; Powers and Duties. Accessed June 29, 2012 from <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/10/164>.

<sup>5</sup> DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms 08 November 2010, as amended through 15 March 2012. Accessed June 29, 2012 from [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod\\_dictionary/data/c/3223.html](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/data/c/3223.html).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

***A STRONG CHINA AND A STABLE EAST ASIAN FUTURE: PART 3***  
***The Peoples Republic of China: Identity and a Peaceful Rise***

By Jeremy Gray

...A great and advanced society has ...a powerful momentum; without destroying the society itself you cannot suddenly check or divert its course.

-Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality*

In Mandarin Chinese, the characters for China translate to “middle country” (*zhong guo*). Appropriate for the name, China is re-emerging as the center of East Asia in the twenty-first century. A presence not enjoyed since the “Century of Humiliation” began in the mid-1800s.<sup>1</sup> China’s progressive embrace of a market economy and global trade produced exponential growth from 1979 through the present. The success of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in this re-emergence provides hope for autocratic states that economic success does not require democratic governance in the Western sense. Given the history of non-democratic regimes with robust market economies (e.g. Germany in both World Wars), the question that arises is why has this meteoric rise not elicited a regional backlash? Building upon the argument in Part 1 and application of the theories in Part 2, China’s national identity, shaped by its history and culture, leads other East Asian states to accommodate vice balance against it. Furthermore, the Peoples Republic of China’s (PRC’s) identity will continue to serve as the basis for the peaceful emergence of China in the center of an East Asian hierarchy.

This article briefly sketches a national identity of the Peoples Republic of China with a focus on its interactions in East Asia. To do so, it provides a brief description of the historical

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and cultural underpinnings of China's role in East Asia and then focus on the actions of the PRC over the last thirty years.

## Historical and Cultural Underpinnings

China has been the center of East Asia for centuries, and its absence from this role is more of an aberration than the historical norm. By the fourteenth century, most of the states of East Asia were near their current boundaries with a functioning state apparatus and China was the center of this hierarchic regional order. This East Asian order resulted from recognition of Chinese military and economic power and therefore its higher status among the nations – its relational authority. With recognition of the Chinese Emperor's status as Emperor, through the tribute process, East Asian sovereigns brought both trade as well as security assurances to their kingdoms. China, from the mid-1200s until the Opium Wars of the mid-1800s was not an expansionist state; its borders were relatively stable. The security assurances were more like a mutual defense pact ensuring stability within the hierarchy and from without. As a result, with few exceptions, during this period East Asia was a stable and economically vibrant region.

In China, the undergirding for the stability of the empire, from Roman times until the Opium Wars, was Confucian tradition. Confucianism seeks a harmonious society. Confucian thought sees the key to stability as the recognition and strict execution of each person's identified position and role in society. It focuses on the role of relationships: rulers and subjects, neighbor and neighbor, fathers and sons, husband and wife, and brothers and brothers. It is through the fulfillment of the strictest interpretation of each person's role in these relationships a harmonious and stable society would emerge. Lucian Pye, a noted scholar on China, further elaborates:

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Beginning in the sixth century B.C. and extending into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century the Chinese functioned within a social and institutional framework that was the most enduring and stable in history. The stability and success of the traditional Chinese order stemmed from the preeminent place the Chinese gave to a remarkable ideology – Confucianism. Confucianism was remarkable because it was secular and was considered valid and appropriate for the problems of everyone – emperor, bureaucrat, landlord, and ordinary subject. It spoke to authority and for the common concerns for all who must look after their children.<sup>2</sup>

The Confucian tradition fundamentally views governance differently than the West. The Chinese mandarin bureaucracy came to prominence during the time of the Roman Empire and endured until 1911. Western bureaucracy is relatively new in comparison. The Chinese Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi in 211 B.C. united China. Prominent among the many contributions Qin Shi Huangdi provided the Chinese was the de-establishment of the Chinese aristocracy and hereditary feudalism. Government, in the form of a bureaucracy, quickly filled the gap. The mandarin civil service system and a meritocracy emerged. In dynastic times, government service was the avenue to improve one's position in Chinese society. The Confucian ideal, according to Pye, has the "government [as] the heart of a civilization. . . the most exalted task for mankind was devising proper and just government"<sup>3</sup> As such, education was the identified method to improve one's position in society through government service and therefore gained prominence within Confucian society.

The only hereditary position of power in dynastic China was the emperor, but Confucianism also provided justification for the removal of emperors. Confucianism, while primarily seeking a harmonious society, allows for revolt against emperors who lose the "Mandate of Heaven." If the ruler did not fulfill his role in Confucian society, under this mandate, the nation and its people would suffer. Drought, natural disasters, as well as failure of the government to govern with benevolence, were indicators that the emperor lost the "Mandate of Heaven" and therefore rebellion was justified.

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Under the Confucian social construct, good men of common means could become emperor, as was the example of Liu Bang. Liu Bang led an army of commoners against Xian Yu and his army supporting the return of the aristocracy after the fall of Qin. Liu Bang's victory led to the establishment of the Han Dynasty and the possession of the "Mandate of Heaven" or the authority to rule. Liu Bang's need for advisors to assist in the running of the nation codified the mandarin bureaucracy and set the precedent for future dynastic changes. The mandarin bureaucracy supported by a Confucian society, ensured stability through multiple dynastic changes until the Last Emperor in 1911.

In the Confucian tradition, the Chinese generally accepted collective vice individual responsibility. Government and social structure intertwined and included formal and informal punishment or censure to handle misbehavior. In the western view, misbehavior is a personal decision by the individual; thereby the individual is responsible and rightfully bears the consequences of punishment for the misdeeds. In dynastic China, the family and community would work to ensure none brought shame to the group. In practice, the government could leverage this dynamic to maintain social order by holding the group responsible for the actions of one of its members. Pye provides an illustrative description:

When a crime occurred, it was not necessary to ensure the perpetrator of the evil act was apprehended and punished; the government had only to identify the community or family to which the criminal belonged and then hold the group responsible. Fathers were not inclined to accept punishment for their sons' deeds and hence vigorously sought to make sure their children did not misbehave. Since one brother could be punished for the act of another, there was a tendency for all to be their brothers' keepers. Patricide in a town would bring lasting shame to all: in the short run higher taxes, and far worse, the perpetual stigma of having one corner of the city walls rounded rather than the normal ninety-degree angle. Any traveler approaching the city could instantly recognize its moral shame, even though the ignominious event might have happened generations before.<sup>4</sup>

Confucian perceptions of cause and effect are fundamentally different than Western. For instance, for the West, power corrupts the good. As a result, Western societies lean towards legal

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means to limit individual power. This legal focus also provides the basis for the pre-dominance of democratic governance structures in the West. The population can control the power of their leaders through the ballot box. From the Confucian view, however, power originates from goodness – that is, one gains power because of his goodness. A man becomes emperor or rises in station because his character is good. This is the basis of the Emperor’s “Mandate from Heaven,” only to be questioned when the people and empire suffer. Under this Confucian construct the acceptance of autocratic rule, as long as it maintains the authority provided by the “Mandate of Heaven,” is acceptable and seen as best for the ordered society as a whole.

The role of the ritual, that is the conduct or etiquette expected for a person’s place and role in society, is paramount. Early Confucian thought, however, allowed for variation by government officials as long as they acted with sincerity. Sincerity in the Confucian sense, according to Pye, originates from the belief that people behaved properly because of an “inner sense of sincerity. ...The sincere man obeyed completely all of the requirements of proper etiquette.”<sup>5</sup> Because of this toleration of fault with officials, Confucian tradition, accepts corruption as long as the official displays sincerity. It addressed a practical need to allow leaders the flexibility to do what is right for a situation, vice strict adherence to rules or norms, for the greater benefit of the group. In reality, it manifested in the allowance of an undermining feature, corruption, in the Confucian construct. As Pye phrases it, “[b]y assuming officials desired to act correctly and by refusing to be arbitrary or harsh about their behavior, the Confucian tradition arrived at the practice of describing in abstract terms the qualities of the perfect official while tolerating in practice considerable personal corruption.”<sup>6</sup>

The Confucian tradition is the basis of the Chinese social construct. It has paternalistic view of governance and places the importance of the group over the individual. Its aim is an

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ordered society – everyone playing their role according to their place. Confucianism’s self-policing nature enabled a central government the ability to govern at great distances and ensure stability even through the struggles of dynastic change.

The Confucian hierarchical view of society extended into its international interactions – most notably in the tribute systems in place through the Yuan (1279-1367), Ming (1368-1643), and Qing (1644-1911) Dynasties. Through most of these dynasties, China was the center of East Asia providing economic and security benefits to those partaking in the tribute system. The Emperor of China ruled with the “Mandate of Heaven” as long as other East Asian sovereigns recognized the authority of China and acted appropriately – all nations benefited.

The Chinese tribute system was the foundation for trade and integration of East Asia between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries. Superficially, this system was an exchange of gifts between rulers. In reality, it was the establishment of trade and military relationship with recognition of Chinese relational authority. As such, East Asia became an integrated economic unit based on the stability and predominance of the Chinese dynasties of the period.

During this period, the closest integration of culture and economies was with Korea, Japan, and Vietnam. In these three states, China’s influence was direct and significant. Other states – like Burma, Ryukyus, Siam, and Java – partook in the tribute system, but for geographic and other reasons, did not integrate to the same extent as the three mentioned. These other states were not as tightly a part of the Sino-centric system as Japan, Korea, and Vietnam, but they were deeply incorporated into the China-centered regional economy, and adopted many Chinese norms and practices as they traded with other nations.<sup>7</sup>

Chinese military and economic prowess dwarfed the other nations in the region. Economically, China in 1750 was producing almost one third of the global manufacturing output.

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The next largest economy in East Asia at the time was Japan with less than four percent.<sup>8</sup>

Militarily the Chinese could overwhelm the contiguous states like Korea and Vietnam. Although during the period discussed, they did not do so. In 648 the Emperor Taizong, of the Tang Dynasty, built a 900,000 soldier professional standing army. In the early 1400s, the exploits of Zheng He's massive expeditions as far as Africa were unparalleled in the world at the time – 315 ships and 28,000 men. The Ming navy included over 3,500 ocean going vessels and over 1,700 warships. In comparison, when the Japanese invaded Korea in 1592 with the intent to conquer China, the Japanese General Hideyoshi had 200,000 men transported on 300 ships.<sup>9</sup> Upon landing in Korea, the Chinese army, coming to the aid of Korea, defeated Hideyoshi's forces. This led to further Japanese isolation from the tribute system – the Emperor excommunicated Japan from the system. Given China's preponderance of economic and military power, it was not for lack of capability to conquer, but the desire not to establish an empire by conquest. The Confucian tradition with pragmatic considerations led to the establishment of the Sino-centric East Asian hierarchy reliant on recognition of Chinese authority.

The predominance of Chinese power filtered to the nations without the need to conquer. The Japanese and Koreans adopted the mandarin bureaucracy, official correspondence in both countries was in Chinese characters, and both adopted the Confucian tradition. Economically, with its Southeast and Northeast trading partners, the Chinese did not need conquest to attain resource requirements. China's limited military action in East Asia was to maintain stability not support expansion.<sup>10</sup> With other East Asian nations adopting the Confucian tradition, the establishment of a harmonious society required each sovereign know their role and associated responsibilities. From a purely pragmatic approach, it makes sense to co-opt your neighbors and gain most of the expected benefits of conquest, but without the cost and without stoking

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perpetual low-level conflict to maintain territorial gains – an optimal balance of cost and benefit alluded to in Part 2 as described by David Lake.

It is with the understanding of this cultural and historical reference one can see the current re-emergence of a national identity more aligned with the China of the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties. China went through the trials of nationalism to try to reconcile a Confucian order in a Western-dominated world and emerged as an isolationist communist state – a state that, at times, looked to eradicate many of the Confucian values from the populace through the systemic anti-intellectualism and dismantling of the bourgeoisie to facilitate the collectivization of society. Even as the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) evolved since Chairman Mao's death, its focus remains the retention of power. The method however has changed. Robust economic growth through exports is the CCP leadership's strategy to modernize China and reach a reasonably well off society by 2020.<sup>11</sup> In 1979, Deng Xiaoping, by re-opening China to the rest of the world, removed the strictures that bound China and kept it poor. The Chinese identity over time will continue to reassert itself. This time through the CCPs selected technocrats acting in an autocratic manner, similar to the earlier emperors, seeking a modern harmonious society.

## China's Re-emergence

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has pursued aggressive economic modernization since 1979, which has accelerated since the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s. Although a comparison to dynastic China may be anathema to some hardliners in the CCP, it is appropriate. The focus of the regime's grand strategy is to aggressively grow economically, to modernize the country, and for China to regain its place as a great nation.

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China has acidulously allowed only controlled access to its internal markets, while developing an export-focused economy. The access to its domestic markets from abroad has increased over time, but China still has selectively protectionist tariffs and indigenous ownership requirements in place for foreign companies operating in China. Ultimately, China will need to increase internal consumption to balance against its exports in order to achieve the autonomy and self-sustaining stability it seeks in the end – ending a reliance on Western demand to fuel growth.

Rapid growth and modernization through exports has brought China economic benefits, but it also has decreased internal stability. The transformation of China from an agrarian to a modern industrial economy over the last thirty years has necessarily required massive internal movement of people from the countryside to the cities. This displacement has strained the social contract between the CCP and the people of China. For China, the export focus is the engine of economic growth and the primary means of maintaining stability through job creation. Kenneth Lieberthal, a Distinguished Fellow and Director for China at the Davidson Institute, notes that the Chinese leadership appreciate the fragility of its situation. The leadership understands it must maintain rapid economic growth to “avoid massive domestic political instability.”<sup>12</sup> The leadership has declared that, based on an anticipated period of relative international peace, China has a strategic opportunity to “become a relatively well-off society” by 2020.<sup>13</sup> Lieberthal further describes the Chinese leadership’s perspective that it is “... successfully riding a tiger – but to dismount (from a program of dynamic growth) would risk being devoured by that tiger.”<sup>14</sup> On December 11, 2008, *The Economist* stated, what is widely believed by China watchers that China needs to maintain at least an 8.0% annual rate of economic growth to maintain enough job creation to accommodate an additional seven million workers a year.<sup>15</sup>

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There are recent indicators of increased internal consumption within China, but there are also concerns over asset bubbles. China is emerging from the 2008 financial crisis better than most. Its U.S. Dollar reserves have enabled it to weather the drop in demand from the West and put it in position to overtake Germany as the world's largest exporter. The CCP has emplaced policies to encourage Chinese consumption – like incentives to purchase cars, consumer durables, and healthcare. Nevertheless, even as these incentives are successful, China continues to increase its share of global exports as its trade surplus continues to increase.<sup>16</sup>

The external view of the CCP enacting all the good emerging from China is a misperception. The reality is the CCP is a regime that has set the conditions for economic success by delimiting portions of the economy and is riding the chaos to their political gain. Additionally, the CCP's primary policy imperative, both international and domestic, is regime survival. Authors James Kyngé and Susan Shirk in their writings illustrate these points.

James Kyngé in his book *China Shakes the World: A Titan's Rise and Troubled Future – and the Challenge for America*, provides a ground-level description of China's rise, one describing the underlying chaos. Kyngé, a journalist for the *Financial Times* who has lived in China off and on for over twenty years, paints a more chaotic picture underlying the perceived monolithic actor known as China. He illustrates the proverbial tiger the Chinese Communist Party is riding – demonstrating a bottom-up version of the traditionally top-down external perception of the last thirty years of reform. Kyngé attributes the rise to the cultural norms and delimiting the industriousness of the Chinese people by post-“Cultural Revolution” reforms, vice a top-down, planned transition from a communist autocracy to a capitalist autocracy. Kyngé debunks the Western perception of China's absolute control of internal affairs. The Chinese Communist Party emplaces policies to encourage economic growth as an internal stability

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strategy in what one could describe as a feudal system of regional and local government officials underlying the national government.

A feudal governance system is an apt descriptor based on the autocratic nature of the system and the graft associated with officials at the local and regional levels. Because of this decentralized autocracy, enacting environmental and human rights policies at the national level does not necessarily translate to action – particularly if the policies appear to conflict with economic growth and stability prerogatives at the local levels. While enabled by globalization, China’s economic ascendancy rides a wave of turbulence at the individual citizen level.

Susan Shirk amplifies the churning described by Kynge in her book *China: Fragile Superpower*. Shirk, a former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State responsible for China, describes the internal politics of China. According to Shirk, the Chinese Communist Party’s (CCP) highest priority is to retain power. As such, Shirk contends Beijing follows three tenets based on lessons learned from Tiananmen Square in 1989: never show a public leadership split, prevent large-scale unrest, and keep the military on the side of the party.<sup>17</sup> National policy is aimed at these goals. A regime so focused on self-preservation and internal stability produces an internally focused national policy, which provides extant potential for misinterpretation by an external audience.

Shirk argues China, absent internal pressure, usually acts in a rational manner in the international arena. She also believes Beijing, however, may feel obligated to act in an unexpected manner to assuage domestic requirements in order to prevent large-scale social unrest and to maintain the support of the People’s Liberation Army. Intent on maintaining domestic stability, Chinese Communist Party policy ensures officials pursue trade and finance options conducive to the economic development sought by the provinces and national

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government alike. Additionally, the use of nationalism as a unifying theme obligates political figures rising within the party to establish themselves as patriots. As such, failure to act on nationalistic rhetoric during an international incident could also lead to large-scale social unrest and potentially loss of PLA support. For these reasons, CCP collective insecurity is the driving force behind China's national policies. This knowledge enables the development of baseline intelligence indicators for Chinese response to world events.

China encourages low-level nationalism to buttress national unity during the societal turbulence of the current modernization. Lieberthal describes this use of nationalism as a “two-edged sword.” Nationalism in China is useful to unite, but it also may force the hand of the regime. At times, nationalism forces leaders to act, domestically and internationally, in a way to validate their nationalist *bona fides*. The paramount nationalist issue for China is the prevention of Taiwan's formal independence. For instance, the increased expenditures to modernize the Peoples Liberation Army (PLA), the Chinese Military, are justified based on the prevention of Taiwan's formal independence.<sup>18</sup> When larger instability does arise, however, nationalism ascends to potentially detrimental levels. A recent example is the nationalist response to international criticism of the Chinese response to riots in Tibet a few months prior to the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. The nationalist reaction elevated beyond the level intended by the CCP. The nationalism rose to a rioting level and showed signs of being outside the government control. The riots began to target western companies, which the government had brought in for various economic reasons. Popular nationalism at a level that would discourage foreign investment, would counter the aggressive modernization strategy China has undertaken. Additionally, an out-of-control nationalism could turn on the regime. While nationalism is a tool for stability, it can also throw the Chinese leadership off the proverbial tiger.

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In recent years, due to the limited application of nationalism for maintaining unity and stability, the regime is increasingly drawing from Confucian tradition. While the CCP has always drawn from Confucianism, it has been selective and specifically to meet the ends of Chairman Mao's vision for the PRC. The emerging approach is more holistic. The utter social chaos generated by the rapid development of China calls for the order promised through the Confucian tradition. Confucianism also espouses actions supportive of a stable autocracy as long it maintains the "Mandate of Heaven" – which currently translates to maintaining at least 8% annual GDP growth and ensuring the proper distribution of the benefits to all regions of the country.

To ensure continued growth, China has undertaken an active strategy to debunk the "China Threat Theory" in order to diffuse any international responses that may disrupt the pursuit of the "relatively well-off society." China has also sought to reassure other states in the region of its intent for a peaceful rise. It has done so through regional trade and the settling of border disputes.

Since accession into the World Trade Organization (WTO), China has become more engaged in developing bilateral relationships in its region, including many agreements short of alliances but more than friendships. The result is China has become the hub of Asian manufacturing.<sup>19</sup> Continued economic integration is reminiscent of the fourteenth through nineteenth century East Asia. Much like the trade relationship with Southeast Asia of the past, China has established a Free Trade Agreement with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Additionally, it continues to become an ever-increasing portion of Japanese and Korean trade. To illustrate the centrality of China economically in East Asia, the trade balances between ASEAN nations plus Japan and Korea, and China are similar, whereas

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the Chinese trade surplus with the West is significant. The reason for this is China, even for the more developed Korea and Japan, is increasingly the final assembly location prior to shipment to the United States and Europe. This is not to say Japan, Korea, and ASEAN nations do not have surpluses and deficits with the West. It is to say an increasing amount of their production is culminating in China. The resulting specialization of economies is indicative of an increasing integration of the East Asia regional economy with China as the emerging gatekeeper. China's rise, while simultaneously lifting the other economies in the region, contributes to the legitimacy of the individual regimes. While not paying tribute to China, like the days of old, it is clear China is emerging as the central, and still growing, economic power in East Asia eclipsing its more developed neighbors in Korea and Japan. As such, by adding legitimacy to the regional regimes China continues to increase its influence with those regimes. The concern, mostly in the West, about China's increasing military and the potential for expansionism remains.

If one looks to the Confucian past and looks at the PRC's actions over the last thirty-years, China is not expansive but is focused on nation building – that is, to unify China territorially. The unification with Taiwan illustrates this view. For China, the Taiwan issue is a matter of unification and nation building, not expansion. China, outside of the Taiwan issue, has resolved most of its border disputes peacefully and often to its own detriment.<sup>20</sup> In doing so, Beijing provides actions to validate the professed strategy of a peaceful rise. Given the behavior of East Asian states, they understand this, and therefore do not fear forceful Chinese expansion. China's self-identity does not presuppose expansion; it does espouse unification and regaining its place as the great power in a stable East Asia.

Modernization of the Peoples Liberation Army does not espouse expansionism. Modernization over the last thirty years has focused on taking Taiwan by force. This is changing.

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While Taiwan's status remains a very contentious issue, the CCP approach has shifted from bellicosity to de-escalation and integration. The apparent success of Hong Kong's integration and the adoption of one nation, two systems approach make eventual Taiwan-China unification more palatable. While remaining capable of using force should Taiwan declare *de jure* independence, the continued need to focus on Taiwan militarily is shortsighted and incongruous with the rest of the CCPs softening approach to Taipei. Instead, modernization is moving in the direction of securing global commons and the engines of economic growth.

China's economic growth has enabled the modernization of its military forces. With modernization and improved diplomatic relations with Taiwan, the CCP is looking beyond Taiwan scenarios for the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The CCP is increasing its focus on its strategic forces – the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF), and the ballistic missile forces. The PLAN is applying the drivers for supporting a Taiwan scenario to increase China's economic autonomy by securing its critical sea-lanes that connect China to energy exporters – with particular emphasis on the strategic choke points like the Strait of Malacca.

In undertaking this altered strategic focus, China has focused resources toward surface vessel modernization and improving its ability logistically to support operations in the Indian Ocean. It has an initial shore-based infrastructure in place – a string of bases along the edges of the Indian Ocean referred to as a “string of pearls.”<sup>21</sup> The challenges of resupply at sea and a dearth of modern vessels is a limiting factor for PLAN operations in the Indian Ocean. The direction of China's power projection development is tracking towards developing the capability for extended sea patrols away from their supply bases. The United States Department of Defense estimates that China will not be able to project significant force for extended periods until at least

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2015.<sup>22</sup> The development of shore infrastructure is a statement of China's intent to project into the Indian Ocean to secure its critical sea-lanes. While modernization of the fleet will build on the "string of pearls," over time it will provide a power projection capability to enhance China's economic power. When China develops the capability to project power without caveats to ensure its economic interests, it will achieve Great Power status. China, historically, has not used power projection to expand its territory, but to underwrite the hierarchy within East Asia at its zenith.

By all accounts, the cyber activity coming from China points to a robust capability. It is unclear what the PRC's intent is for this cyber capability. As mentioned above, the prime directive of the CCP regime is to stay in power through economic growth and culturally, indirect methods of influence are preferred.

As stated above, to stay in power the Party believes it must maintain robust growth for stability. Economic stagnation would lead to instability that could topple the regime. Its goal is a "reasonably prosperous nation" by 2020. To attain this goal requires an extended period of peace. A war prior to the attainment of a "reasonably prosperous nation" would prove disastrous and endanger the regime.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the PRC must maintain national security while focusing on growth— computer network warfare can meet these needs and is synchronous with its cultural identity.

Confucian tradition, as described above, is useful to ensure social stability. The collapse of the Soviet Union shapes the CCPs approach to development. The PRC will not pursue an arms race that would put its military spending ahead of its economic capabilities.<sup>24</sup> As such, China pursues a balanced approach by expanding the realms of international competition. While there is a physical need for military power, the ability to achieve similar effects without the significant capital outlay is desirable. Given the rate of technological development, physical platforms could

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prove obsolete or out of alignment with policy prior to full fielding. Computer Network Attacks (CNAs) can provide an adaptable long-range strike capability with limited attribution for comparably low capital requirements. While exploiting computer networks, which enable CNAs, the PRC can also obtain closely held information to help advance indigenous economic and military developments as well as gain an upper hand in any negotiations.<sup>25</sup>

The PRC can derive deterrence value from the demonstration of a limited attribution, long-range strike capability for the PRC. The limited international protocols, or defined thresholds for acts of war, and the inability to identify specific origins of such attacks, provides the ambiguity to preclude any unified international action.

While the PRC is unlikely to conduct a catastrophic computer network attack, it will continue to map and collect information through computer network exploitation. The PRC will do so to support its economic, security, and political information requirements. It will continue network mapping to enable future intelligence gathering and computer network attacks. The PRCs computer network warfare capabilities provide the appropriate tools for current development and peaceful deterrence needs and positions them well for the future. By demonstrating a robust capability, the PRC can hold its own with more developed competitors and reassure its partners, thereby contributing to the cementing of the hierarchy.

## The Leadership Question

To be the center or top of a hierarchy of state one must demonstrate a willingness to lead. In its “Peaceful Rise” approach, the PRC has purposely avoided taking a leadership role in the Western sense. As stated above, the rapid modernization of China makes it vulnerable. The PRC

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will acidulously avoid anything that could derail progress – external stability is a required condition for the necessary internal tumult for rapid change. Therefore, the PRC has specifically avoided assuming an active leadership role – preferring an indirect approach to influence.

China, to date, has avoided taking a leadership role for two reasons related to regime preservation: do nothing to upset external stability to allow an internal focus and allow others to bear the costs associated with leadership until the nation is prepared to do so. The Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) actions reflect a desire to maintain stability even to the point of propping up North Korea as a lesser cost than allowing a Pyongyang collapse. Active leadership, in the Western sense, could lead to regional concerns about Chinese intent and bring undesirable issues to the fore prior to the CCP being ready to deal with them.

A demonstrative leadership role would pique the “China Threat” narrative from regional and Western politicians – both in and out of power. China at this point still sees itself as too fragile internally to be too active internationally. Additionally, the PRC materially does not have the physical capability to maintain a regional order on its own. The capabilities required to secure the commons (particularly the sea-lanes) that fuel regional economic growth are still years away from fruition. The costs of maintaining stability and order in the region would distract from addressing the internal stability issues that most directly affect the viability of the CCP – as described above as the primary motivation of the regime policy.

The progression of Chinese regional leadership is reflective of its confidence in its internal situation. If the CCP can achieve a “reasonable well-off society” by 2020 as planned, one would expect the confidence of the regimes internal status to continue to increase and parallel its external willingness to lead. In other words, as the CCP modernization plan nears

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completion and tames the internal tiger as it approaches 2020, the PRC will assume more visible leadership presence in the international realm.

China has assumed a passive, or discrete, leadership role to enhance stability on its periphery. It is common knowledge that the PRC has increased its contributions to the regional order by providing financial support to the countries on its periphery to increase their economic viability and extant stability. In essence, out of self-interest China is already taking on a limited paymaster role described in Part 2 of this series. One would expect this role to increase to include arbitration between aggrieved states in the region as it pertains to Chinese interests and regional stability.

When the PRC does assume a more visible role, one should not expect a primarily coercive Chinese leadership, but one that primarily leverages its authority in the region to optimize the maintenance costs against the benefits of economic integration. Excessive coercion is counter to the Confucian underpinnings in the region and would be counterproductive, as it would significantly increase the costs to maintain stability in the region requisite for economic development. Overt coercion would prove the exception not the rule. Coercion as a course of action, in an East Asian construct, is limited to threats to Chinese sovereignty – as that definition evolves – to include the protection of the East Asian regional stability and access to global resources access for economic reasons.

China's future leadership actions will reflect its identity. The colonial past of East Asia provides this common view of the sanctity of state sovereignty and a reflection of Confucian ordering principles. Historically a strong China has leveraged its clear authority to influence others and avoid military conflict unless threats to regional stability force international action. There is nothing in its current behavior to refute this outlook. China will assume a more visible

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leadership role as it gains confidence in the stability within its borders. In doing so its leadership will reflect a uniquely East Asian approach reflective of Confucian self-ordering and focus on increasing autonomy and influence within the global economy.

## Conclusion

The PRC's national identity derived from its historical and cultural underpinnings as well as its current actions portend an emerging power that does not seek expansion. The identity described above denotes CCP intent on maintaining power while modernizing its economy and regaining its Great Power status. In doing so, as it did between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries, China seeks stability internally and in East Asia writ large. The underpinning of Confucian traditions emphasizes the benefits of social order by each person knowing their role and expected behavior. This construct extends into China's regional relations, as it is becoming the center of economic activity. As economic growth provides legitimacy for the smaller states, the PRC's increasing capabilities in the global commons looks to ensure not only autonomy for China, but for stability in the entire region. Moving forward one should expect continued economic integration as well as naval and cyber capability development from China. China will continue to work to integrate Taiwan peacefully. Domestically, given the described identity construct, the return of Confucian ideas in a modern and CCP friendly form will emerge and become more prominent. The CCP will refocus on Confucian mores as a necessity to defuse nationalist sentiment and increase their policy flexibility internationally, and specifically with Taiwan.

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Since the emergence of Confucianism during the time of the Roman Empire in the west, social stability and ruler benevolence was the goal. It remains so today. China is not expansionist – it seeks stability. It is through stability China achieved its greatest heights in history. When it has reached those heights, the rulers within the region and their populations benefitted. It is for these reasons that countries are not balancing against, but instead accommodating China’s rise.

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<sup>1</sup> “China’s Century of National Humiliation (*Bainian guochi*) ... Chinese books on the topic generally tell the tale of China going from being at the center of the world to being the Sick Man of Asia after the Opium War (1840), only to rise again with the Communist Revolution (1949).” William A. Callahan, “National Insecurities: Humiliation, Salvation, and Chinese Nationalism,” *Alternatives* 29 (2004): 199-218.

<sup>2</sup> Lucian W. Pye, *An Introduction to China*, 3rd ed., (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1984), 30.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> Kang, *China Rising*, 27.

<sup>8</sup> Kang, *China Rising*, 29. Paul Bairoch, “International Industrialization Levels from 1750 to 1980,” *Journal of European Economic History*, 11, no. 2 (1982):260-334.

<sup>9</sup> Kang, *China Rising*, 30. Paul K. Davis, *Encyclopedia of Invasions and Conquests from Ancient Times to the Present* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 1996), 131. Edmond Capon, *Tang China*, (London: Macdonald Orbis, 1989). Louis Levathes, *When China Ruled the Seas: The Treasure Fleet of the Dragon Throne, 1405-1433* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 82.

<sup>10</sup> Kang, *China Rising*, 38-40.

<sup>11</sup> Kenneth Lieberthal, “China: How Domestic Forces Shape the PRCs Grand Strategy and International Impact,” *Strategic Asia 2007-08: Domestic Political Change and Grand Strategy*, ed. Ashley Tellis and Michael Wills (Washington, DC: National Bureau of Asian Research, 2007), 29-30.

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

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> “Suddenly Vulnerable,” *The Economist*, December 11, 2008, [http://www.economist.com/research/articlesbysubject/displaystory.cfm?subjectid=478048&story\\_id=12773135](http://www.economist.com/research/articlesbysubject/displaystory.cfm?subjectid=478048&story_id=12773135) (accessed January 2, 2009).

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<sup>16</sup> “Fear of the Dragon,” *The Economist*, January 7, 2010, [http://www.economist.com/research/articlesBySubject/displaystory.cfm?subjectid=478048&story\\_id=E1\\_TVNTPPDV](http://www.economist.com/research/articlesBySubject/displaystory.cfm?subjectid=478048&story_id=E1_TVNTPPDV) (accessed June 16, 2010).

<sup>17</sup> Susan L. Shirk, *China: Fragile Superpower* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 39.

<sup>18</sup> Lieberthal, 47-8.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 49.

<sup>20</sup> China has settled all of its land border disputes with the exceptions of India and Bhutan. Since 1949, China has settled 17 of 23 land and sea border disputes peacefully; relinquishing over 3.4 million square kilometers of potential irredentist claims. M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008), 2. China's last military aggression was in the 1979 invasion of Vietnam. "...[I]n the past two decades China has resolved territorial disputes with Afghanistan, Burma, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Russia. More recently, it has resolved its disputes with Cambodia and Vietnam." David C. Kang, "Getting Asia Wrong: The Need for New Analytic Frameworks," *International Security* 27, no. 4 (Spring 2003): 69.

<sup>21</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, "Center Stage for the Twenty-first Century," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 2, March/April 2009, 22.

<sup>22</sup> Ronald O'Rourke, *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities – Background and Issues for Congress*, updated November 19, 2008, (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2008), 25.

<sup>23</sup> Lieberthal, 29-30.

<sup>24</sup> In an address to military commanders, after an announced reduction in Defense spending from a 14.9% increase in 2009 to only a 7.5% increase for 2010, President Hu Jintao stated, "The military must conscientiously obey and serve the broader picture of the tasks of the party and country." Hu added that China "must more conscientiously integrate national defense and military development into the system of national economic and social development." Reuters News Service, "Defense Needs Must Be Linked to Growth: Hu," *Singapore Times*, March 14, 2010.

<sup>25</sup> Shane Harris, "China's Cyber-Militia," *National Journal Magazine*, May 31, 2008, [http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/print\\_friendly.php?ID=cs\\_20080531\\_6948](http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/print_friendly.php?ID=cs_20080531_6948) (accessed January 12, 2010).

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## *BOOK REVIEWS*

*The Changing Character of War, Hew Strachan & Sibylle Scheipers, eds. Oxford University Press, 2011.*

*Reviewed by Dr. Michael R. Matheny*

Over the last decade much has happened which might lead some to question whether the very character of war has changed. This collection of twenty seven essays is the result of the Changing Character of War Program sponsored by the Leverhulme Trust between 2003 and 2009. It is an interdisciplinary look at the changing character of war that embraces chapters by historians, political scientists, economists, and ethicists. The book is broadly organized into five parts to answer the questions:

- What has changed?
- The purpose of war: Why go to war?
- The changing identities of combatants: Who fights?
- The changing identities of non combatants: Who suffers?
- Have the ideas which enable us to understand war, theory and strategy, changed?

The major point around which the book is organized is that “war is transformative in a way that few other human activities can match. It is a maker, breaker, and transformer of society, politics, economy, and culture.” (524) The various chapters are uneven in quality but there are a number of strategic insights in several chapters that make for very worthwhile reading. Azar Gat discusses the impact of lawfare: the legal and normative constraints on the conduct of war which are gaining potency in liberal societies. Gat sees this as the inevitable constraints associated with the onset of limited war. The author views limited war as the result of spread of democracy, nuclear weapons,

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and “from the apparent disappearance of great power conflict with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war” (44).

Strahan’s chapter on “Strategy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” is certainly worth your time. He reaffirms a Clausewitzian view of warfare and stresses continuity rather than change in the character of warfare. His best insights are: “In the competitive and fast moving environment of war, where neither side can monopolize control, however, much each struggles to do so, the dynamic and reciprocal nature of war shapes strategy more than strategy shapes war” (507) and “so if policy’s part in the formulation of strategy in practice generates change and unpredictability, what can give continuity to strategy ...turn back to strategic theory and acknowledge what lies at the heart of strategic theory is not policy but war itself.” (510) Spoken like a true historian.

The most interesting chapter in the book is Antulio Eschevarria’s “American Strategic Culture: Problems and Perspectives.” Echevarria is skeptical of the notion of strategic culture and challenges some of the most repeated assertions about American strategic culture. Specifically, he takes issue with American technological romanticism (fascination with technology), casualty aversion, and a strong preference to fight battles not wars. He points out that American fascination with military technology is a post World War II phenomena and that casualty aversion depends upon the degree of national interest. He points to conflicting generational and service cultures. He does suggest, however, that Americans have a penchant for theory (Mahan, Warden, Mitchell, etc.) the often overlooked characteristic in the American way of war. Finally, he concludes “in the realm of policymaking, some degree of uncertainty is unavoidable, studies of strategic culture do not appear to reduce it in any appreciable way” (442).

This book is a worthy project but only achieves its purpose in part. The few really good chapters in no way justifies the exorbitant price. Those interested in mining strategic insights from this 564 page collection would do better to pick it up at the library.