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Abstract

Throughout history, militaries have been accused of fighting the last war. Each new conflict brings about unforeseen challenges which often mandate adaptation or a need to transform. Failure to transform appropriately can lead to defeat, either immediately or during the next conflict. The Army's ongoing transformation effort is correctly structured to prepare the Army to defeat future threats from traditional, as well as emerging, adaptive, asymmetric threats posed by non-state actors, while simultaneously engaging Al-Qaeda and other guerrilla forces in counter-insurgency campaigns on two fronts. Comparing and contrasting transformation efforts today to those of the past will show how well our organization has restructured to defend our Nation.

### Compare and Contrast Transformation Efforts

Throughout our Nation's history, the Army has faced the need to transform in order to adapt to challenges from emerging technologies, changing geopolitical circumstances, and the evolving capabilities of our enemies. It is not unusual for the Army to find that it must radically change training and doctrine and philosophy to meet these challenges. It has often enough been the case that the Army has failed to properly transform itself and adapt to emerging realities created by changing technology and strategy. The Army failed to foresee and adapt to the preeminent influence of mass in the defense brought about by the machinegun, long range artillery, and transportation infrastructure hinted at by the American Civil War and the late 1800 European Wars. Immediately prior to the Pearl Harbor attacks and America's entry into World War II, the Army was already transforming itself based on observations of the battlefield successes of both the Germans and the Japanese, built around technology – the rifle, tank, airplane, and the aircraft carrier – and strategy, primarily Blitzkrieg which relied upon combined arms and joint-service operations (Stewart, 1-75).

Clearly, the Army's efforts to adapt to and defeat America's enemies were successful in these two examples; yet, the question of vital importance to the Nation's post 911 future remains: Having failed to transform itself appropriately following the end of the Cold War and following the downfall of the most likely threat challenging America's national security – the Soviet Union – is the Army transforming to successfully meet the challenges of the current enemy as well as traditional nation states? Two critical areas of transformation efforts that we must get right in order to be successful are Basic Combat Training and the Philosophy and Doctrine by which we fight.

### Transformation in Basic Combat Training

Basic Combat Training (BCT) teaches the skills necessary to defeat enemy forces while also preparing to defend against future threats. Transformation is happening throughout the Army. One area of success is in BCT with the inculcation of values, warrior ethos and culture. Brigadier General Benjamin C. Freakley, Chief of Infantry, Fort Benning stated, "This is about shifting the mindset of

Soldiers from identifying what they do as a Soldier 'I'm a cook, I'm an infantryman, I'm a postal clerk' toward 'I am a Warrior' when people ask what they do for a living." (Burlas, 2004, pg 1).

Cold War doctrine shows warfare taking place on a symmetric battlefield. This is not the case today. The current war on terror is defined by an asymmetric battlefield – one in which the enemy is intermixed within the local population. The way Soldiers are trained must be based on the threat it will face. The challenge is teaching techniques to counter a difficult and constantly adapting type of warfare, which is unfamiliar to most new Soldiers. What young Soldiers are taught during BCT becomes second nature. The Chief of Staff of the Army, General Peter Schoomaker, unveiled at the Association of the United States Army Symposium in 2003, that all Soldiers know that in order to succeed the Army must change everything - from weapons to the individual Soldiers ability to think on more than a tactical level.

This change in training forced a change in the trainer as well. BCT required combat experienced noncommissioned officers as drill sergeants. The newest trainers, just back from the combat zone, identified with the necessary transformation. Sergeant First Class Lewis, a drill sergeant at Fort Jackson, South Carolina voiced his support of the changes in the doctrine supporting BCT during an interview with the post newspaper. "Our old POI was peacetime-oriented for a peacetime Army. We now are an Army at war, and our BCT POI had to evolve to support that" (Lewis, 2004, pg 1). Lessons learned during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan made this even more evident. Leaders at all levels had concerns. Feedback from the field to units preparing to deploy made a valid argument for the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) to re-look what was being taught in the nine week BCT. The concern generated and motivated the Army's senior leadership to form numerous Task Forces to study the content of BCT. A comprehensive review of the curriculum was done. The study resulted in the development of the Warrior Ethos and the other changes needed to better prepare the fighting force.

Changes such as landmine defense, advanced rifle marksmanship, vehicle rollover procedures, escalation of force, convoy operations, detainee operations at point of capture, urban operations and convoy live fire exercise, shifted cold war tasks to current day doctrine as outlined in Appendix C of the

BCT POI. These tasks and drills were changed by the United States Army Accessions Command under the direction of TRADOC in the current regulations governing the institutional training of Soldiers.

Though success of the Army's strategic transformation is evident, it is imperative that we study history to ensure we do not repeat mistakes of the past. War has always generated change. There have been "catalytic periods in history" (Gutman, 2007, pg. 32) of changes in the military with troop training and force reductions. Troop strengths during World War II (WWII) were close to 8.3 million. Historically, the war was a success. The Soldier tasks that were displayed and successful on the battlefield then, are some of the same tasks thought to be new to the training base today. Training changed and troop reductions began. The strength of the Army decreased from millions to fewer than 600,000. Following the surrender of Axis forces, our nation did not foresee a national security threat in the near future. Less than five years later the Korean conflict began and the nation's inability to learn from the last war proved costly. America failed to plan for the threat, failed to learn from past mistakes and once the war was over failed again to "train" from past experience. Vietnam was another example of the military's failure to learn from the past and prepare for the next war. The military deployed in support of Desert Shield/Desert Storm only to "win" the war but, again repeat mistakes already learned. General Sullivan engaged in yet another drawdown, not projecting the future threat and now the Army works diligently to catch up. The tasks reintroduced to institutional doctrine are not at all new. The Army dealt with convoy operations, urban warfare, detainee operations and landmine defense throughout combat history. The threats we face today are not all that different for what our military has experienced during past wars.

Success of the Army's strategic transformation program starts with the training of Soldiers. The skills necessary to fight and win on the battlefield are taught in basic combat training. However, warrior tasks and drills are not the only change needed to make transformation a success. A cultural change is also required. The way a Soldier thinks and how they think has a strategic impact. Today's conflicts demand a Soldier who has the adaptability and flexibility to perform under all conditions. It is imperative that we teach them to think, plan, prepare, and rehearse – expect the unexpected and know how to react.

Current training modalities have created a generation of Soldiers that are comfortable operating “outside the box”. Basic combat training was previously based on robotic drill and precision execution. Gone are the days of marching around on pavement for endless hours only to never move from point A to point B in a uniformed fashion after graduation. More importantly is teaching a Soldier how to think:

There are several indications that a significant culture change has occurred in portions of the U.S. Army. The Army’s transformation, multiple combat deployments over five years of war and a changing American society have had a significant impact on our culture...they know they must constantly adapt to both survive and accomplish their mission...(Cardon, 2007, pg 2) .

Soldiers are employing a level of intellect rarely seen in the past. A culture of doing only what is told is gone. Today, the “strategic corporals” make decisions that affect not only them and their squads, but possibly a civilian population in another country. Leaders are seeing a dramatic change in Soldiers and the way they understand other cultures. Soldiers have learned to distinguish between the beliefs of a country, its ideology, the values of its people and that of the enemy. Men and women are doing more than closing with and destroying the enemy. Soldiers know in order to finish this war, they must win the “hearts and minds” of the local populace.

The cold war is over. The Army is transforming. General Wallace, Commander, TRADOC said, “Gone are the peacetime boot-camp activities...basic training now incorporates real-time lessons from the combat zones in Iraq and Afghanistan to prepare Soldiers more quickly to face the operational environment” (Wallace, 2007, pg. 1). The U.S. is entering the 7<sup>th</sup> year in a global war on terror with better trained, more adaptive Soldiers who are showing an intellectual understanding of the battlefield far greater than any before.

#### Transformation in Army Doctrine and Philosophy

Incumbent upon senior Army leadership is the challenge of continually adapting the guiding philosophical thought structure of the organization as captured in doctrine: the way that we incorporate

our technological capabilities into a coherent philosophy of how we think about, prepare for, fight, and win in battle. The American culture of innovation has flavored the Soldier's historical nonchalant approach in implementing standard doctrine. Rommel's famous comment that it is pointless to know the US Army's doctrine because we don't follow our own manuals is insightful. Throughout WWII, Army leaders were continually adapting to circumstances and innovating new ways to solve tactical, operational, and strategic problems faster than those solutions could be institutionalized and trained. Today, the Army is again implementing a dramatic and historic transformation program that is correctly structured to adapt to the unique challenges posed by a tough, resilient Islamofascist world-wide insurgency. Simultaneously, they are leveraging technology and hard-won lessons from modern combat to remain generations ahead of any potential threat from traditional state-actors such as China or a resurgent Russia.

The Army has historically undergone periods of institutionalized innovation in doctrine, but with differing levels of success. Previous Army transformation programs, such as the pentomic ??(you are ) model of the early Cold War era and the drawdown following Desert Storm, resulted in strategic doctrine and thought that was inadequate to deal with the conflicts that followed (Stewart, 251-330). Focused upon the threat of atomic warfare, the Army adopted a strategy of fighting based upon the employment of tactical atomic weapons in order to effectively negate the massed power of Soviet armor in threatening Western Europe. However, this doctrinal approach to modern warfare, focused upon the technological means to achieving peace, failed to recognize that more traditional, human means still applied to solving strategic problems during conflict, and set the stage for initial miscues during the 1960's anti-colonial and communist wars of revolution (Clausewitz, 165-166). In an address to the House Armed Services Committee, Secretary of the Army Pete Geren articulated clear evidence that the Army will not lose sight of strategic fundamentals:

The purpose of the Army modernization effort is to maintain dominance in land operations - we never want to send our Soldiers into a fair fight. The goal of Army modernization is to know before the enemy does where our forces are and where the enemy is. Knowledge is power, and

nowhere is that dictum more applicable than on the battlefield...(Geren, 2007).

Central to the change in Army strategic doctrine and the maintenance of dominance throughout the full spectrum of conflict is the Army leader. From corporal to general, the warrior pentathlete is the new vision of a leader in the Army. The Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), General George Casey, has repeatedly stated that this is the basis for the future. This leader is adaptive and innovative; he is fluent in the philosophy and the complexities of modern warfare. He is physically tough, steadfast and aggressive under fire, yet understands the nuances of counterinsurgency warfare (Casey, 2007). This change in the intellectual culture in the Army is critical to leveraging adaptive and innovative strategies that tip the balance of power away from insurgents and toward the American Soldier.

Transformation in strategic doctrine is best exemplified by the development and adaptation of a new, Army wide counter-insurgency field manual, FM 3-24 Counterinsurgency. Developed by the current commander in Iraq, General David H. Petraeus, this new strategy enabled conventional Army forces in Iraq to successfully transition from the initial, force-on-force battle and adapt to the unique challenges of a brutal insurgency. This has led to a dramatic improvement in kinetic and non-kinetic battlefield successes, while simultaneously recognizing that ultimate success on the battlefield is dependent upon local populations that are fully invested in the stability and success of their local and national civil governing institutions (Petraeus, 2007). Transitioning to this new doctrinal strategy while heavily engaged on two fronts can only be compared to the Army's WWII doctrinal transformation in response to the devastatingly effective combined arms power of the German Wehrmacht's Blitzkrieg.

There are still a number of unresolved challenges to the Army's transformation effort, specifically regarding the question of unconventional warfare: How to integrate the grey area of unconventional warfare into Army doctrine? With the OSS and Special Forces, the Army realized successes of strategic and operational significance during the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, yet always with ad hoc forces, crafted at great reluctance and quickly demobilized after the conflict was over. However, the Afghan and Iraqi campaigns and the nature of the enemy have broadened the doctrinal discussion, and based upon the hard

lessons learned on the battlefield, the Army may well address this one, doctrinal shortcoming (Rothstein, 28-45 and 137-186 and Stewart, 409-497).

At the end of the day, it is not the Army's hardware that determines ultimate victory or defeat, but the ability of the Soldier to adapt, and find a way to win. Proof positive of the success of strategic doctrine and philosophical transformation is senior Army leadership acceptance and even adoption of innovative practices employed by special operations forces, such as beards and nonstandard uniforms, in order to gain operational and strategic advantage. Clearly, FM 3-24 was written with T.E. Lawrence's "Twenty-Seven Articles" in mind, and operations by all Army forces engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan prove the worth of the adaptive, pentathlete model of the strategic Army leader (Brown, 142-147). As the enemy is constantly adapting and innovating, the success of the American Soldier on the ground proves the viability and ultimate success of the Army's transformation to strategic doctrine.

### Conclusion

When the survival of the Nation is at stake, it is the Army that bears the responsibility to defend her from all enemies. The Army today is the result of the many changes, adaptations, and transformations made over the Army's two hundred thirty year history, brought about by the many hard lessons learned after too many hard fought battles. The Army, and all the services, has often enough been ill prepared, improperly postured, or just out of time to deal with the enemies faced by the Nation. Indeed, just as in early 1940, the Army in 2000 was already exploring the need to transform itself to deter new and emerging enemies (Army Transformation Panel Institute for Land Warfare, 2000). The events of 911 were possible because of a failure of the Army to protect, but the counter-attacks since then have fulfilled the Army's mandate: two regimes were successfully overthrown, their territories occupied, and most importantly, America has not been successfully attacked in over six years of war. These victories have been accomplished only after hard fought battles, with more battles yet to come in this period of persistent conflict (Casey, 2007). That the Army has achieved these victories at ever lower costs to America's

blood treasure, as well as historically low costs in collateral casualties, is only possible due to the tremendous effort and emphasis placed upon reinventing and transforming the Army at all levels.

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