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OPERATIONAL COMMAND AND THE FUTURE

by

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College, the Department of the Navy or the Department of the Air Force.

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Abstract of
OPERATIONAL COMMAND AND THE FUTURE

This paper explores the operational level of command and the challenges of the future. The attempt here is one of organization and synthesis. The development of a conceptual framework, a context for future operational command, is the basis. From that framework, commanders can derive the challenges of transforming strategy into realizable operational goals. Within that framework future operational commanders must apply a process appropriate to their problem. There must be a method for application of a process equally appropriate to the challenge. It is the contention here that success will require some specific things of future commanders.

Clever application of the operational art, redefined for our future, will be exercised by an operational commander skilled differently than the commanders of the past. In light of the evolving security environment, they will require a deeper understanding of the conduct of war in specialties other than their own. They must command with greater sensitivity to social, political and historical contexts. Finally, they must be skilled in an operational process adapted to the new environment.

To rely on these future commanders, begs provisions for them to prepare themselves. They must experience the processes, demands and capabilities of warfare areas other than their own. They must develop, through education and experience, the sensitivities required for the future. And finally, they must be interoperable; experienced in the assembly and employment of the operational Joint Task Force.

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OPERATIONAL COMMAND AND THE FUTURE

Chapter I

Introduction

A firm and full understanding of the operational level of command is not an easy thing to come by. In general, published definitions are often more confusing than enlightening. To apply them beyond an academic level sometimes begs a broad, inter-service experience few mid-grade officers have. On the other hand, specific examples, especially in this age of technological warfare, are often so unique their anecdotal quality makes them often more arcane than helpful. This paper is an exploration of the operational level of command and the challenges in its exercise in the future. It is the contention here that the challenges will be different and future commanders must prepare in a new way.

The first main section of the paper is an attempt to arrive at an understanding of the operational level of command. Published definitions are examined. It is further isolated by a look at the tactical and strategic levels. Finally, it is described in terms not unlike other definitions, but in a context that may be more illuminating.

The second and major section of the work confronts the questions: What will be the future stage for the operational commander? In pursuit of an answer, we first view the world and the future from the vantage point of some senior policy makers

with their different perspectives. Next, we probe the methodological problem of how to transform the information available into something the operational commander can use. The result is a process embedded in a conceptual framework from which the future commander can assault his operational problems.

With the context of the preceding sections as our basis, the third section examines the resulting challenges to the operational commander in the future. Here, we combine the responsibilities and duties at the operational level with a way to deal with possible/probable future threat scenarios in an environment of reduced resource availability. This should reveal the major challenges facing those future operational commanders.

In the final section there are several conclusions. The future operational commander will require a wide and varied background not limited to significant joint military experience, as we now know it now. The first battle will not be a combat but deterrence through routine power projection and the threat of creditable rapid deployment of tactically and operationally significant forces. The development and maintenance of this capability will require a clever application of the operational art, redefined for our future, by an operational commander skilled differently than the commanders of the past.

The result is still to answer the questions of the SO syllabus and FM 100-5 and link the means, prescribed and available, through the process of operational command to the ends desired. The contention here is that the challenge will be different and so must the operational commander.

Chapter II

THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF COMMAND

"Activities at the strategic level focus directly on national policy objectives. Strategy applies in peace as well as war." (FMFM 1 pg 22 and JCS Pub 1-02)

"Military Strategy is the art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation or alliance to secure policy objectives by the application or threat of force." (FM 100-5 pg 9 and JCS Pub 1-02)

"It follows that there exists a discipline of the military art above and distinct from the realm of tactics but subordinate to the lofty domain of strategy. This discipline is called operations (or the operational level of war), and is the link between strategy and tactics" (FMFM 1-1 pg 6)

"Operational level of War-(DOD) The level at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted and sustained to accomplish the strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operations." (FMFM 1, pg 83 and JCS Pub 1-02)

"While the operational art sets the objectives and pattern of military activities, tactics is the art by which corps and smaller unit commanders translate potential combat power into victorious battles and engagements." (FM 100-5 pg 10)

What could be more clear! In an academic sense, there should be little debate over the meaning of the operational level of command. But, in an era of lightning operations and single stroke campaigns, with objectives varied from the level of Desert Storm to Grenada, accomplished by a wide variety of joint and combined forces; the specific application of these definitions may be blurred. With the reduced emphasis on full scale strategic nuclear operations or WW III, fought on the German plain, type campaign plans of the cold war; the distinction between the levels of war in the modern conventional sense is eroding. There is a real danger that the operational level of command might appear to descend as to become inseparable from tactical command in the eyes of the Joint Task Force (JTF) commander.

Strategy will continue to be the purview of national leaders in war and peace. It will dictate the precepts for military strategy to be devised by the most senior levels of the military chain of command in conjunction with the National Command Authority (NCA). Tactics was, is and always will be where the rubber meets the ramp, ships engage at sea, steel is on targets and warriors face each other in mortal combat.

So, beyond the sterile book definitions then, where does the operational level fall; and more importantly, where will it fall in the future? A helpful way to conceptualize and internalize what the operational level of command will mean in the future might be to extend an analogy from the tactical level. Let us examine the difference between an heroic act and successful tactical command in battle.

The heroic act is the decisive action of one man or a crew in the conduct of the engagement. Successful tactical command is the leadership of the individuals, who will accomplish heroic acts in the course of their own confrontations, and attainment of the objective of the battle. Tactical command is then managing a group like the hero manages his weapons. But commensurate with the change in scope is an emphasis on different responsibilities. Incumbent on the leader are all aspects of the cycle: training, employment, recovery, regeneration and reemployment; for as many iterations as it takes to achieve the objective, not just 'hair on fire' combat. The contention here is that the operational level of command can also be revealed in this analogy.

What separates operational command from tactical command is the vision and responsibility to employ the large units who will

meet the enemy directly, whatever their size or stripes, as a tactical commander employs his heroes. In that elevation of responsibility, the difference is again one of scope. The operational commander employs forces in the pursuit of strategic goals. In this sense the JTF could be a tactical or operational command. For purposes of this discussion, we confine ourselves to the operational level JTF. The reason for this parameter is that the use of the JTF in the future will probably tend more towards an operational role.

The important elements of command in an operational level JTF are the employment, synchronization and sustainment of those units, or tactical forces, to achieve these broader objectives. The expansion of scope, by virtue of goal, necessarily implies an emphasis on different tasks than the exercise of command at the tactical level. Planning is emphasized over the actual combat, synchronization over the smallest details of execution and sustainment over the management of supplies on hand. Ultimately though, while the tactical commander accepts missions and achieves prescribed objectives, the operational commander must cast a wider net. He must translate strategy into a condition that will realize the ultimate goal. He will develop a sequence of actions, based on realizable operational objectives, to achieve that condition. And, he will solve the basic operational problems of mission accomplishment with resources available. It is a level of responsibility to see a larger picture, not incumbent on the tactical commander, and yet still span the gap from strategic goals to execution and success the strategist may never have to bridge. This differentiates operational level command.

This level is more than the addition of theater logistics to the leadership of tactical command, quantitatively different only in scope. Its goals place it at another level that is qualitatively different. But, while the operational commander is more often separated from the crush of combat his main concern still lies there. The importance of this otherwise common sense distinction comes in the consideration of operational level command in light of our most recent experiences. The operational commander must maintain a different focus than the tactical leader even though the operation may hinge on a single bold stroke. This will not change, even though the scope of future contingencies may lure the operational commander to lead at the tactical level.

If this then is the operational level of command, in a general sense, the next question is in what framework can the operational commander expect to function. A context in which to place operational command is critical to extend application to the future. To that end, the next section examines the conceptions of those who may define it. There is also the more specific but less accessible question of how to extend our current knowledge about the world to prepare for the future. Further, there are additional constraints of political feasibility and economic reality that contribute to the framework. The goal of the next section is then to construct a conceptual framework in which to approach future challenges through an appropriate process of operational command.

Chapter III

THE FUTURE STAGE FOR THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

The future stage for the operational commander will be shaped by many forces and interests before he arrives to play his part. Since the logic of war, at its root, is political, so will the operational commander enter a play in progress that is a political drama. As the military instrument of national power in the US is subordinated to civil direction, so will the protagonists be elected and appointed officials. Combined here will be an evolving antagonist that is different than the one of old. To develop a conceptual framework in which to ply the operational level of command one *must examine the perspectives* of those who will dictate the action. To that end here are the perspectives of three senior players which describe the drama about to unfold.

The Honorable Richard A. Armitage is the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Affairs. His view of the world unfolding before us is both interesting and complex. His perspective is that of a policy maker and contributor to strategy. It includes the evolving state of the world political scene, the resultant threats to US national interests and the attendant effects on US national security issues, strategic goals and the force structure to realize them.

In a speech at the Naval War College this fall, he described a dangerous world threatening US vital interests in a new way. The similarly dangerous but more consistent bipolar world of the

Cold War is gone for now. Replacing the Soviet threat are smaller but multiple regional threats. Contingencies requiring U.S. military response will come from less predictable sources and develop below the threshold of Cold War sensitivity. Evolution may seem to be faster, because of how intelligence assets are arrayed. Also, threats may exist in more than one place at a time. The level of response appropriate will also vary with conditions. The political constraints that may accompany crises will further complicate strategic and operational problems. In short, the aggregate threat index may well be up not down.

This perspective is well understood and generally accepted by those who may participate in the military operations of the future. Another perspective is less understood and not so widely accepted by those who will be responsible for future military operations. It is the one of those who would disassemble the current force structure and thus constrain the future commander's spectrum of responses. This perspective will require a more in-depth discussion.

Representative Les Aspin is the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and a recognized expert on the defense budget. His view of the world contains the some of the same facts but different interpretations. His perspectives include another perception of the evolving threat and the budget which will effect the changes in force structure that will both satisfy the demands of the current US economic milieu yet meet the threat.

The most current and comprehensive review of this perspective was contained in a 6 January 1992 speech by Mr. Aspin. In

the keynote address to the Conference on National Security Issues sponsored by the Atlantic Council of the United States, he outlined his views of the changing world and perspectives on resource allocation for national security.

Mr. Aspin outlined his view the of the two Soviet revolutions, of the modern era. He described the first, December 1988 to December 1989, as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the escape of Eastern Europe from Soviet control and the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact. The result he said was the five year budget agreement between Congress and the President which included the Base Force concept. The second, August 1990 to December 1991, was the break up of the USSR. The result of all of this he said was the evaporation of the threat that had justified the Base Force.

The question now is; "Where do we go with US defense policy without the Soviet threat?" Mr. Aspin is in search for a new basis for force structure planning. He contends that the rationale for the continued allegiance to the Base Force concept, presented by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in his reconfirmation hearings this December, are no longer valid. Further, he said the taxpayers will not accept a planning construct, "...that never says exactly how much force structure is enough." Force structure projections in the Six Year Defense Plan must not be allowed to float based on amorphous commitments to project Desert Storm type power around the globe in the absence of clearly defined, specific threat scenarios.

To provide direction and context for the Conference, Mr. Aspin proposed a threat base budget for defense. In this, the

body of his remarks, he discussed the nuclear world, the conventional world, the industrial base and the technology base. The real threat, he says, is differentiated from any used in current planning processes because he thinks the American public perceives a different threat than the type currently producing military force structure. "Talk to folks[sic] outside the 'bel-tway' and the threats to national security are drugs, terrorism and the economic challenges [to our way of life]." In a discussion of what mix strategic and conventional forces should have he unfortunately stated that we should develop a reasonable mix and, "...design our threat to match that division [mix]." Regardless of the logic of his presentation or the quality of his military judgments, the future operational commander will have to live with the results of his tenure.

For nuclear force structure he advocates that only the US possess it, until no one else does. In quoting the Defense Minister of India, Mr. Aspir said the lesson of Desert Storm for the third world is; "Don't attack US interests without nuclear weapons." He proposed a build down of these forces while maintaining 'hedge' forces against the threat of nuclear proliferation.

The logic for conventional force structure planning he proposed was based on how many equivalent Desert Storms we chose to pursue concurrently. This disregards judgments that we cannot now pursue even one Desert Storm.

For the industrial and technology bases he proposes build down without significant loss of capability. Unfortunately, he did not explain how such a feat might be accomplished.

The key element, he contended, was to develop a control mechanism for a rational build down. This, he concluded, calls for a responsible relationship between the Congress and the Executive branch. The methodology for this process would begin with a realistic threat based budget vice the annual incremental arguments with the President and the DOD over single systems in the current budget. The current force structure must be replaced with one based on a new threat conception.

In evolving this new threat conception, he acknowledges that the former Soviet threat is not yet gone. But, the new threat is different. While the Soviets were rational and backed down when the correlation of forces was against them; the new threat will be irrational. In his paradigm, deterrence is political as well as military and the old guidelines do not apply.

Mr Aspin went on to say, that in the new force structure, we must maintain our technological edge. The message of Desert Storm for the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee is that we can project power successfully to defend vital national interests, with few casualties, because of this technological edge. And, deterrence, for him, is the political use of that edge. Further, Desert Storm showed force planning based on fixed, existing alliances is deficient.

All of this leads to a fundamental disconnect between what strategy may be, based on Mr. Armitage's ideas, and the resources

that may be allocated, based on Mr. Aspin's ideas. It bodes a mismatch between policies desired and strategies available to realize them. Until these conceptions agree, the challenges in future operations will be towering.

General James McCarthy, USAF, is the Deputy Commander in Chief, USEUCOM. His view of the world is distinctly military and focuses on the USEUCOM area of operations (AOR). His perspective is that of an operational commander of one of the major unified commands who will have to deal with this possible disconnect. Presented in address to the Naval War College in January 1992, it includes the mission, threats, evolving force structure of that command and how to deal with the resulting operational problems.

His statement of the USEUCOM mission was a clear, albeit broad, statement of an operational mission in general. It is to support and achieve US interests and objectives throughout the AOR, provide combat ready forces to NATO or US commanders and conduct unilateral or coalition operations.

His description of the threat USEUCOM would meet was also indicative of the general threat at the operational level. It described both new and standing threats, divided by region, for the AOR. It also included the transnational threats of drugs, terrorism, technology transfer and Islamic fundamentalism. He acknowledged the evolution of the focus in the AOR from bipolar to multiregional[isic]. The analysis and exposition of the threat in this manner applies directly to the problem of operational command independent of geographic AOR.

Force structure planning factors were embodied in the USEUCOM force design goals. These were general operational goals to maintain adequate forces and infrastructure to accomplish the USEUCOM mission. Specifically, they were-- support US strategy; secure peace and stability; demonstrate US commitment; maintain US influence; sustain NATO solidarity; manage crises; respond to contingencies and ensure maritime superiority. They connected the general statement of the mission through AOR specific concerns to the current European security architecture and NATO's essential roles. In essence, he worked from ends desired through means available to arrive at the NATO strategic concept (see Woerner) that accomplished his mission derived from national goals. He acknowledged forthcoming NATO force reductions. In light of the ends desired with the changing threat and the constrained means, he proposed the operational solution: USEUCOM as a forward based contingency force.

This process was an excellent demonstration of the operational level conception then translation of available means to the achievement of desired ends. While it is surely base in the Joint Operation Planning process, most accessible here in NWP 11(rev F) and AFSC PUB 1, it is adapted for the new approach USEUCOM takes. In that it was a coherent process, the ramifications extend beyond the operational problem in the USEUCOM AOR. A review of the successes of recent USEUCOM contingency operations: SHARP EDGE, the Noncombatant Evacuation Operation(NEO) in Liberia; QUICK LIFT, Belgian and French forces to Zaire; and those surrounding the war in Iraq demonstrated the effectiveness

of the USEUCOM operational processes. It is thus a model for operational command in general, especially at the JTF level.

With this context, Gen McCarthy went on to develop the USEUCOM approach to future contingency operations based on the rapidly assembled JTF. What the operational commander in the USEUCOM AOR can respond to is, of course, predicated on the force structure available. If he has misperceived the national goals, miscalculated the threat or ignored the probable resource constraints; future challenges might exceed his ability to respond. Thus the operational commander of the future must be clear on the thinking of those who will set national goals and national budgets. And so, the future processes of operational level planning and execution must reside in a conceptual framework that accounts for and projects this thinking.

From these three perspectives, it is possible to develop a conceptual framework to examine the challenges to the future operational commander. It begins with the national goals an operational commander may be expected to achieve in his AOR. These goals will come directly from the perceptions of the national leaders evolving strategy. They will be formulated from the vital interests and the perceived threats to those interests. The operational commander must apply the resources available to achieve the national goals. This operational process is translating national policy into operational goals achievable with the resources available. The importance of a new conceptual framework is that it allows for more accurate perception of the evolution of the entering arguments for this process; ends and means.

The future operational commander, with guidance, must recognize the probable ends, threat and means available then solve the technical aspects of his specific operational problem in the new context. First, however, we must settle on a methodology to apply the operational process in this framework.

The use of this new conceptual framework requires some critical judgments by the operational commander about intentions, evolving threats and future scenarios. They will far exceed the direct guidance available to him and extend beyond the horizons of the bipolar world in which our military system and leadership has learned to operate. To make these judgments, he must decide issues for which complete information is simply not available nor will it be forthcoming. For these judgments to be more than reaction and have a consistency that will facilitate efficiency and effectiveness at the operational level of war, the commander had better have a method.

The best method to employ the operational process in this framework is projection through careful extrapolation of the current trends discernible with attention to the lessons of history. This approach is not without its pitfalls though. Simplistic extrapolation will never be enough. A warfighter cannot be so consistent he is predictable without courting defeat. And, the cataclysmic changes of the past five years show it as an insufficient tool for preparation. The key to meaningful careful extrapolation is to discern the correct trends and events to extrapolate.

There are other predictive methodologies available in the world of the social sciences like game theory and modeling. (see Beckman, especially chapter 3) But, non-empirical techniques (i.e. game theory) are isolated from the real time world of the operational commander. The predictive models current in political science literature are not adaptable to the wide scope on which they must be applied to yield the concrete answers necessary for force planning operational planning and execution (e.g. Alesina/Rosenthal and Jacobsen). Techniques isolated from history and current events lack the context that would make them practical and useful outside an academic environment. So, disregarding use of eccentric and technical predictive techniques, obtuse to his needs, some sort of extrapolation is all the operational commander has.

The perceptions of the nature of the events affecting the world of the operational commander over the past five years, illustrated best by the statements of Mr. Aspin, might lead one astray. There is the temptation to classify them as discontinuous and thus discount careful, or any other type of extrapolation, as a useful tool in preparing for the future. Thus, the operational commander must find another method.

The contention here is first, that the noted shortcomings of other predictive techniques eliminate them from our consideration. Further, the time scale with which the operational commander is most concerned is short enough to accommodate careful extrapolation, even in light of these events. With this in mind, one should consider recent events not discontinuous but dynamic.

Thus while startling; they are not wholly inconsistent with our knowledge of history and current trends. These events thus challenge the limits of extrapolation but do not obviate it.

The technique of careful extrapolation combined with the lessons of history is the best method for national leaders and operational commanders to develop goals and plans for the future. It will be successful because it can be readily and reliably used intuitively by those uninitiated into the world of the social science academic. The key to this method is the extrapolation of the correct trends and events, thus the qualification; 'careful' extrapolation. Application of the lessons of history will facilitate the identification of the right trends and events to extrapolate. The properly schooled operational commander will be able to use it well in preparation for the execution of his mission. He must be prepared to see the new engines of change in the political environment and discern the most probable effects on the international security environment. Here, the lessons of history will serve as his context. And thus, can the operational commander prepare.

Wide and easy use however, does not establish nor vindicate careful extrapolation as the method of choice for the application of the military instrument. Accepting the proposition that it is a realistic, meaningful tool in general, and further accepting that other tools might be beyond the scope of application here, makes it the reasonable alternative. Its applicability and the intuitive nature of its use will make it the method of choice for strategic and operational decision makers for the foreseeable

future. An excellent example of the predominance of this type of decision making is contained in the book The Commanders, by Bob Woodward, describes the processes leading to the major decisions in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. This then leads us to the selection of careful extrapolation as the method of choice for the commander to probe the minds of the human element in future operational scenarios. It will give insight required for commanders into the operational stage of the future.

Using what appears to be careful extrapolation the DCinC USEUCOM has set forth the process for his future operation execution. As a result of the process, the USEUCOM approach to contingency operations will be through a regionally focused, component centered, task organized JTF, augmented by experienced USEUCOM personnel. This concept and the process established to implement it are an eminently logical approach to the USEUCOM operational problem. In a general sense, this is a satisfactory framework and process for future JTF commanders independent of AOR or service component.

This framework for the conception and the attendant process for solution of the operational problem must include the reality of shrinking military budgets and a declining military infrastructure. The economic realities applying to the future of the U.S. defense budget are clear. The President and the Secretary of Defense can preempt the axe of the Congress or accept their judgments. The President's State of the Union Address is a clear attempt to preempt the Congress and shape a military build down according to his judgments. By exceeding the 25% reduction

levels of the 1989 budget agreement by about 5%, the administration has thrown down the gauntlet to Congress. If they want more money out of defense now they will have to specify new reductions and justify them to the American public. With the bright light of the success of Desert Storm on out of work defense workers and soldiers separated from a less and less capable military, the hands of the Congress may be tied for now. They face election in an era where cutbacks remove jobs vice creating them. In either case the future reality for the operational commander is a reduced force structure. These reductions will be in the face of a disintegrating Soviet/CIS threat but a steady or even burgeoning regional threat.

Finally, to complete the conceptual framework, we must reemphasize the perceptions of the civilian leadership to bound the problem of the operational commander. Without the rigid bipolar world of the past and the focus of a monolithic Soviet threat, the urgency and support of the political leadership may well be less. With the political focus more diffuse, the resultant resource allocation to the operational commander may be lacking. Until the devolution of national military strategic commitments recedes to the level of the resources to be allocated, the possibility of dangerous policy-strategy mismatch will be high. The major challenge to the operational commander here is to survive this period without over commitment and disaster.

Chapter IV

THE RESULTING CHALLENGE

As described above the resulting challenge is formidable. The world of the future, represented by the perspective of Mr. Armitage, will be filled with threats from quarters new and old. A significant change will be the end of the adversarial but stabilizing bipolar relationship between the US and USSR. Many regional conflicts have failed to escalate or escape superpower control under the influence of this relationship. The list of regional threats that will come to the fore now is long. The past possibilities of such conflicts escalating to involve U.S. interests now figure as probabilities. Thus, the threats to U.S. vital interests will be of a new type, and while of smaller scale, their multiplicity may constitute a greater threat overall. Further, the strategic problems the U.S. will confront in this challenging environment may not lend itself to the more black and white judgments of the past.

The major threats to U.S. vital interests will come, not from a monolithic Soviet opponent and its clients, but from many corners of a multi-polar world. Requirements for U.S. military response will thus arise from less consistent and predictable sources. With many new and different types of possible enemies, the scope of required U.S. military responses will also evolve. The type, level and weapons of these potential conflicts will complicate the planning and execution of operational level command well beyond the current horizons.

The political challenges posed by this new and wider spectrum of threats will complicate the problems of military strategists immensely. The resultant effect on the problem of the operational commander will be a multitude of political constraints in an increased variety of scenarios.

At the operational level, U.S. commanders, their plans and their forces will have to be necessarily more flexible. The initial conditions for the exercise of force to secure national interests and its termination are changed. The spectrum of possible conflicts and non-combat operations will widen substantially. Operational commanders will have to prepare for actions from small scale unopposed NEO to peace keeping operations in hostile environments to combats large and small.

The character of these operations can also be expected to change more rapidly than the Cold War has prepared us for. There will have to be new concepts for the employment of US forces. The concept of the rapidly assembled, and quickly retired, JTF may be the new norm for operational command. Accordingly, commanders and staff officers must be interoperable in joint and combined operations in the same sense as the weapons of the tactical warrior. Contingencies will unfold in an environment of heretofore unconsidered kinds of political and strategic guidance. If more than one pot boils at once the commander of the future might expect less of the NCA's attention and support than did General Schwartzkopf in Desert Storm.

Superimposed on these challenges, the operational commander will have to deal with the economic realities of shrinking budg-

ets and reduced military infrastructure. His ability to quickly escalate his response to a burgeoning conflict may be severely limited. There is the distinct possibility that there will be situations beyond the operational commander's ability to respond, some without augmentation.

The cumulative result of these challenges to the operational commander will require new ideas for the operational employment of force. The new paradigm is sure to emphasize a budget based on current existing threats to U.S. national interests vice a retained reserve capability to respond to the possible future threats that will evolve from a new, multi-polar world. The responsibilities of the operational commander may, in the future, extend beyond the current charge to organize, train and equip forces conceived in Cold War terms. Constraint of the resources available to the operational commander might become his primary concern. If national and allied strategic goals stay at the current level, this constraint will deeply challenge his application of the operational art. New organizational schemes for employment, like the JTF concept above and others not yet conceived, may be required to meet the needs of contingency operations and fulfill the National Military Strategy in this environment of reduced resources. The future operational commander must still be prepared to translate strategy into realizable operational goals and employ the resources available to achieve them.

Chapter V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

So what is to be said of the future operational commander? To meet the challenges described above he must possess a unique vision and be nurtured in his development. As politics is the art of the possible, the classification of the resolution to any operational problem as impossible is unacceptable. Rather, the answer will and must be: how can one effect desired consequences? and what will be the cost and risks? The operational commander who fails to choose and indeed succeed in this course has failed in his responsibility and will most certainly be replaced by one who will try. The more important issue is to prepare that operational commander for success.

In light of the challenges that await the future operational commander and the approach he may have to take to succeed, how should he prepare? By what process should he expect to solve his operational problems? What approach should he take?

Future operational commanders must be prepared to respond to a wide variety of military challenges in a radically new environment. They must be grounded in the technical expertise of the warrior to be sure. But, a single area of expertise is not enough. Successful future operational commanders will be less likely to rise from the nurturing of the old system. He must have the ability to grasp the general aspects of technical expertise in areas other than his own. This ability might be demonstrated by success in one technical area, but must be followed by

education in others. Current joint Professional Military Education and work as a Joint Service Officer on a staff is not enough. While one prospective commander cannot be expert in all warfare areas, he must have the opportunity to familiarize himself, in detail, with others. The USEUCOM Joint Warrior program is a start, but it must expand. Giving a Navy officer his first ride in a tank when he is a senior Captain is too little too late. The expense and short term inefficiency of brief but intensive orientations for mid-level officers, in the warfare specialties of other services will be, in hindsight, a small price considering the challenges we face. There will be difficulties in approval and implementation of a proposition like this to be sure, but hard does not mean invalid.

Future operational commanders must also have a meaningful background in history and international affairs. The decisions these commanders will have to make will require sensitivity of a level that probably was not required in the rigid, reliable bipolar world we just left. The guidance for operational commanders in contingency operations, when our nation may be engaged in several at once, may not be the micro-management of the Cold War nor the undivided attention of Desert Storm. These commanders will necessarily have to be more independent and commensurately more capable and reliable. The prescription here is simple, but a challenge in the same sense as the last. Career military officers must be selected for education at the level of the Naval War College and beyond. To remove a successful mid-level officer from the fleet, flightline or troops to pursue challenging

post-graduate education in history and international affairs during a twenty to thirty year career might be hard to sell. The dividends of such investment however, will however be immense.

The framework outlined above, including the example of the operational processes in USEUCOM, prescribes a path for this future operational commander to follow. The proposition of standing JTFs, organized regionally, for all possible threats, is not economically feasible. The USEUCOM approach to contingency operations is another good guide. The future operational commander must understand and be proficient in initiating a crisis response, assembling and operating the JTF. The only way to prepare is to do it. He must be intimately familiar with both the process of crisis response in this format and the means available.

The hope of a highly trained cadre of staff and shooters upon which to organize a JTF, for every case, might also be beyond the economic realities we currently confront. So to might the maintenance of our overwhelming technological superiority be to much to wish for. That is until disaster strikes.

The political element of deterrence through rapidly deployable, credible forces which are frequently exercised might also exceed our budgetary resources. Quickly assembled JTFs based on a core of experienced warriors will have to operate better with fewer resources. To make 1+1=3 in this scenario, the future operational commander will require training and education, of the type specified above, combined with meaningful experience at one or more levels of these JTFs. He must develop as an interope-

rable staff officer, as interoperable in joint and combined operations as the weapons of tactical warriors must be in the execution of those operations. The reason is clear, the responsibility for success will fall squarely on the commander. This places an even higher premium on his skills. If these recommendations lead some to believe they advocate an elite corps of selected officers, like the Prussian General Staff, they are wrong. The process should begin as one of training, education and experience for all career officers with the pyramid narrowing consistently towards the higher and more intense levels, not discontinuously based on intensive examinations at mid-career. If the military is smaller, it must be better prepared. If the officer corps is to be smaller, they must be better leaders. The future operational commander must prepare for his role from his first day of commissioned service. We fail to provide the chance for him to prepare at our peril.

NOTES

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Voices added to Mr. Aspin's increase the perception that the overall threat is less. In confirmation hearings before the Senate in January, the new JCS/J2 and head of the DIA, Lt Gen Clapper, USAF, acknowledged that the Soviet threat is now less. In response, Sen. John Warner (R, Virginia), said an overall decreased threat surprised him as it did not match the briefings he had had in the past month and he would have to reconsider his position. In January testimony before the Senate, the Director of Central Intelligence, Robert Gates, also acknowledged the Soviet threat was decreasing. Secretary of Defense Cheney, while acknowledging the requirement to decrease the Defense budget, is guarded against reducing too fast. When all of this was reported by Wolf Blitzer on CNN, 23 January 1992, there was no mention of the contention by each that other threats are growing. The intimation of the report was that the administration would further reduce planned procurements and in the future engage in more research and development than production of weapon systems.

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