

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 23-04-2008		2. REPORT TYPE FINAL		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Adapting U.S. Forces to Meet Operational Requirements				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Major William C. Hendricks IV Paper Advisor (if Any): Professor Andrea Dew PhD.				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT For Example: Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the Naval War College faculty in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Joint Military Operations Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT In order to effectively plan and execute military operations in today's security environment, Regional Combatant Commanders require forces capable of planning and conducting missions across the range of military operations. Recent experience has shown that while U.S. forces are highly effective in high-intensity conflict against conventional enemies, they are somewhat less capable in low-intensity conflict against unconventional threats. By using the Soviet experience in Afghanistan, this paper identifies the dangers associated with a force unable to properly plan and execute operations against an unconventional opponent. The paper examines current U.S. military forces and defines three non-existing characteristics and resources needed for success in today's global security environment. It uses the United States Marine Corps as a model to identify changes currently underway, as well as areas for improvement. Finally, the paper makes recommendations that can be applied to all U.S. military forces, enabling successful operations in low-intensity conflict against unconventional threats while maintaining high intensity war fighting capabilities.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Adapting U.S. Forces					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 19	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-3556

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

Adapting U.S. Forces to Meet Operational Requirements

by

William C. Hendricks

Major USMC

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

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

Signature: _____

23 April 2008

Abstract

Adapting U.S. Forces to Meet Operational Requirements

In order to effectively plan and execute military operations in today's security environment, Regional Combatant Commanders require forces capable of planning and conducting missions across the range of military operations. Recent experience has shown that while U.S. forces are highly effective in high-intensity conflict against conventional enemies, they are somewhat less capable in low-intensity conflict against unconventional threats. By using the Soviet experience in Afghanistan, this paper identifies the dangers associated with a force unable to properly plan and execute operations against an unconventional opponent. The paper examines current U.S. military forces and defines three non-existing characteristics and resources needed for success in today's global security environment. It uses the United States Marine Corps as a model to identify changes currently underway, as well as areas for improvement. Finally, the paper makes recommendations that can be applied to all U.S. military forces, enabling successful operations in low-intensity conflict against unconventional threats while maintaining high intensity war fighting capabilities.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Culture and Language	3
Integrated Training	8
Flexible Doctrine	12
Conclusion	16
Recommendations	17
Notes	18
Bibliography	19

Introduction

On February 15, 1989 the last remnants of the Soviet Red Army left Afghanistan via the town of Termez on the Afghan-Uzbekistan border.¹ The withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan marked the defeat of a major world power by what was originally described as “a rag-tag group of guerilla bandits: the Mujahideen.”² With the last page of its Afghanistan experience written, the Soviet army took its place in history with the armies of Alexander the Great and the British Raj who were also unable to conquer Afghanistan.³

When Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan at the height of the Cold War in 1979, they were unable to predict the difficulties they would have in the years to come. Soviet leaders, having spent years preparing for war with western powers and confident of the number of tank divisions at their disposal, were convinced they would have little trouble securing a new pro-Soviet client regime in Kabul.⁴ Yet, as Richard Shultz and Andrea Dew argue, despite the overwhelming combat potential of the Soviet Army, its time spent in Afghanistan was defined by “only two successful major military operations: the invasion and the withdrawal.”⁵

On closer inspection, Soviet forces encountered operational defeat because of three significant factors: Soviet operational planner’s ignorance of the cultural and ideological makeup of the enemy; improperly trained soldiers; and the Soviet inability to make rapid adjustments to doctrine. These shortcomings, especially Soviet ignorance of Afghan cultural norms, resulted in increased support provided to the Mujahideen. The heavy-handed actions of Soviet soldiers trained only to deal with a conventional enemy compounded the fallout from cultural ignorance. The Soviets’ inability to rapidly adjust their conventional doctrine

to an unconventional enemy that would not stand and fight made their failures more catastrophic.

The United States (U.S.) currently enjoys its role as the world's most capable conventional fighting force. Like the Soviet Army of the Cold War, U.S. forces are highly trained in conventional tactics based on the combined arms maneuver of mechanized forces.⁶ Post-Vietnam U.S. leadership has assumed that a force trained to conduct major combat operations against a peer can be just as effective against an irregular enemy without any adjustments made to personnel or doctrine.⁷ But, as the 2007 Marine Operating Concept (MOC) points out, "recent experience has revealed the fallacy of such assumptions".⁸

Current U.S. Regional Combatant Commanders (RCCs) face a challenging task. Like their Soviet counterparts from the 1980s, they must maintain their conventional capabilities while simultaneously dealing with a host of irregular forces with unique cultural identities. This demanding requirement is driven by the global security environment which the 2006 Naval Operating Concept (NOC) defined as a complex mix of regional and rising peer competitors as well as violent non-state extremists who seek to destabilize legitimate governments.⁹ In order to counter this wide array of threats, RCCs must maintain a forward deployed force that is capable of planning and conducting missions across the range of military operations (ROMO).¹⁰

The argument in this paper is that in order to avoid failures similar to those the Soviets experienced, RCCs can not rely solely on their conventional fighting ability. To be effective, RCCs must possess forces defined by three currently non existing characteristics and resources: operational planners with linguistic and cultural competency; troops trained to

operate in, and effectively transition between, low and high intensity scenarios; and the ability to adjust doctrine rapidly.

Each characteristic will be addressed individually in order to illustrate the changes that U.S. forces must make to provide RCCs with these highly capable forces. The first section of this paper addresses the need for cultural and linguistic training for operational planners. The second addresses the training methods required to produce troops capable of executing operational plans in today's security environment. The third addresses the issue of doctrine and the need to remain flexible. The final portion of this paper summarizes the author's conclusions and provides a consolidated list of recommendations. In each section, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) is used to illustrate the deficiencies in each category, the changes that are currently underway, and the additional improvements that are required.

Culture and Language

In order to develop sound operational designs, operational planners must understand the nature of the enemy. Over the past fifty years, U.S. military leadership has placed an emphasis on conventional tactics. As a result of this mindset, operational planners often based their assessment of an enemy's capability on the number of tanks possessed. As history has demonstrated, failing to consider all elements of an enemy system, to include cultural elements, can result in poorly developed operational plans. In order to provide RCCs with operational planners that can properly assess the nature of the enemy, future operational planners must have training that places an increased emphasis on cultural awareness and linguistic knowledge.

Ability to understand the enemy system comes from studying and being exposed to their language and culture. The recent request from Admiral Fallon, the former commander of Central Command (CENTCOM), supports this position: "...operations...depend on personnel who have foreign language proficiency and cultural awareness competency in addition to military skills"¹¹. To provide combatant commanders with the forces they require for successful operational planning and execution, the U.S. must develop leaders who can design and execute high-intensity operations, as well as assess the unique cultural factors of the irregular forces that comprise much of today's security environment.

The USMC certainly agrees with the principle of educating operational planners and emphasizes the need to assess the nature of one's enemy. Marine doctrine states, "Success depends not so much on the efficient performance of procedures and techniques, but on understanding the specific characteristics of the enemy system."¹² The need for a strong academic foundation for operational planners is supported by Marine doctrine's emphasis on the mental aspect of warfare: "Mental forces provide the ability to grasp complex battlefield situations; to make effective estimates, calculations, and decisions; to devise tactics and strategies, and to develop plans."¹³

Military victory is not guaranteed to the country that possesses the most troops. Military forces employed by uneducated operational planners can be defeated by an enemy with less measurable combat potential. The Soviet failure in Afghanistan highlights the danger associated with operational planners who lack cultural awareness. In the 1980s Soviet operational planners designed operations to disrupt Mujahideen lines of communication by targeting the rural Afghan population.¹⁴ Prior to this decision, the Mujahideen had been receiving only passive support from the local population. With their

attempt to disrupt lines of communication, Soviet leaders violated unspoken elements of Afghan culture that emphasized the separation of combat operations from daily life.¹⁵ In contrast, the Mujahideen, out of respect for traditional culture, had kept their camps away from the villages¹⁶. Soviet operational planners' decision to bring the fight to Afghan villages produced a country of angry refugees who transitioned to active support of the Mujahideen¹⁷. Although Soviet forces achieved several tactical victories, their cultural ignorance precluded operational success. Instead of quashing Mujahideen support, the Red Army's operational plan had ignited it¹⁸.

In an attempt to provide RCCs with operational planners capable of operating in the current security environment, the USMC has made adjustments to entry level Marine officer training. Newly commissioned Marine officers receive a class on cultural awareness and a brief on the Marine Corps' foreign language program. However, despite the changes made to the training of future operational planners, there are deficiencies. The culture and foreign language classes combined account for only 2.5 hours of training out of a scheduled 1589 hour curriculum; thus, only .13% of the training curriculum is devoted to this issue our RCCs deem essential.¹⁹

Further investigation makes evident that the various military occupational specialties (MOSs) within the USMC place differing amounts of emphasis on the cultural aspect of officer development. Once newly commissioned officers graduate from the Basic Officer Course (BOC) and report to their MOS school there is no standardized educational continuum. The formalized PME program for aspiring infantry officers at the Infantry Officers Course (IOC), and the lack of any formalized PME program at the respective level aviation schools best demonstrates the disparity in their preparation. While completing the

tactical portions of their training, young officers at IOC must complete a reading list designed to form the foundation of their academic development.²⁰ In contrast, newly-winged aviators have no formally assigned reading list.

One should expect to find differences in the training programs of new military officers. The specific job requirements placed on junior officers at the tactical level depend on his/her specialty. The specific skills required of an aviator are very different from the skills required of an infantry officer. These differences account for the disparity in tactical training. However, the differences in tactical skill sets do not account for a disparity in educational development. Operational planners in the USMC and other service branches are developed from junior officers that come from all specialty backgrounds. Once an officer, regardless of his/her background, is placed in the role of 'operational planner', the requirement to develop a sound operational plan will be universal. Given this fact, a disparity in formalized education among officers who represent the pool of future operation planners is unacceptable. The disparity in cultural and linguistic development in junior officers will result in future operational planners who lack the education RCCs need.

To develop the type of operational planner that can support the RCC, the U.S. Armed forces must place more emphasis on language proficiency and cultural awareness. This study should start at the beginning of every officer's career and continue throughout his/her professional development. A more formalized professional military education (PME) program that begins with entry level training and is integrated into continued education at the career, mid level, and senior leadership schools can accomplish this goal. Furthermore, because many officers are unable to attend resident schools, a formalized PME program

should be available in every operational unit and should be able to provide similar learning opportunities for this large group of future operational planners.

It could be argued that since unit leaders have only a finite amount of time to conduct training, placing formalized PME programs in all operational units will result in reducing effort in other areas. By this rationale, it could then be reasoned that with an increased emphasis on PME, the Marine Corps will lose some of its high intensity war fighting capability. Although loss in high-intensity capability is a potentially disastrous side effect, the loss of an entire military campaign due to poor operational planning is far worse. The Naval Operations Concept (NOC) summarizes how poorly developed plans, even at the tactical level, can cause serious side-effects: “In today’s complex world, even minor tactical actions can have strategic implications necessitating refinements to professional development...”²¹.

While the Marine Corps needs to maintain its ability to dominate on the high intensity battlefield, it must guard against being hamstrung by poorly developed operational plans. As seen above, the fallout in Afghanistan caused by operational plans that placed Soviet conscripts in Afghan villages negated any advantage resulting from the Soviet potential to conduct high-intensity operations. Although the risk of losing high-intensity capability merits consideration, the damage caused by losing a campaign or military operation due to poor operational planning is unacceptable to the RCC.

Integrating language and cultural awareness into the training of U.S. forces will provide the RCC with operational planners able to design and execute high-intensity conflicts, while answering the need for a force that will not undercut operational victories

due to cultural ignorance. In the words of the late Professor Adda Bozeman, one of academe's most accomplished post-World War II scholars, "culture matters"²².

Integrated Training

In the wake of World War II, the U.S. spent its efforts developing the capabilities of its armies by integrating land forces with mechanized assets. This approach was due to the widely held belief that if an army could be successful in major combat operations against a peer, it would also be successful against guerilla forces with less measurable combat potential.²³ In contrast to this former theory, recent military leadership has come to agree that what is effective in a conventional war may prove disastrous when conducting operations against an unconventional adversary.²⁴ Moreover, in today's security environment, the actions of one poorly trained individual may cause the failure of what is otherwise a well-developed operational plan. The recently experienced fallout from the conduct of U.S. servicemen below the squad level at Abu Ghraib, although not on the battlefield, demonstrates that a few poorly trained personnel can have a strategic level impact on a military campaign.

Today's security environment requires the U.S. to provide RCCs with Marines and soldiers who are versatile and quick to respond to new situations. They need to be able to shift from negotiating with a local leader, to conducting a platoon-sized assault, and then immediately return to a diplomatic mindset once the area has been secured. To provide RCCs with forces able to execute well developed operational plans--troops capable of conducting high-intensity and low-intensity operations as well as the ability to rapidly shift between each environment--current training programs must make adjustments.

The strategic level fallout caused by poorly trained individuals has resonated with U.S. leadership. The potential for damaging an otherwise sound operational plan has led to an increased emphasis on training forces to meet their intended use. In a 2007 address to Congress, the commander of CENTCOM stated that in order to maintain a force capable of a full spectrum of responses, U.S. forces must conduct realistic training exercises.²⁵ The NOC defines the current security environment as a combination of traditional, irregular, and disruptive challenges²⁶. It follows then that a realistic training exercise is defined by how closely it parallels the environment experienced by forces in support of the RCC.

The USMC agrees with the need for properly trained forces. The doctrine of the Marine Corps states: “As the nation’s expeditionary force-in-readiness, the Marine Corps must maintain itself for immediate employment...and only in opposed, free-play exercises can we practice the art of war. Dictated or ‘canned’ scenarios eliminate...the essence of war.”²⁷

Once again the Soviet struggle against the Mujahideen demonstrates the danger associated with improperly trained troops. The Soviet leadership’s methods were no exception to the commonly held post WWII mechanized approach to warfare. Prior to their deployment to Afghanistan, Soviet forces had been trained to operate in the wide open steppes of Europe against a near-peer competitor like the United States or China. The lack of training in unconventional warfare led to heavy handed actions by Soviet troops who continually looked for a conventional solution to their problems. The actions of the individual Soviet soldiers contributed to the Soviet operational failure.²⁸

But it is unfair to say that the Soviet troops’ poor performance cost them the Afghanistan campaign. More accurately, Soviet troops performed exactly as they had been

trained, and as a result, were unable to achieve operational success. The training of Soviet troops, or in this case, the lack thereof, resulted in actions by individual soldiers that damaged the Soviet campaign

Recent experiences by U.S. forces have once again reinforced the need for troops trained properly to execute operational plans. The political attention the Abu Ghraib scandal received, as well as the scrutiny placed on tactical actions by USMC forces in Haditha, has emphasized this need. In light of this requirement, the USMC has made adjustments that have greatly improved the training and capability of the forces provided to the RCC. Most notable is the development of Desert Talon and Mohave/Mountain Viper. Desert Talon and Mohave Viper aim to prepare battalion and squadron sized units for deployment to Iraq. Mountain Viper serves the same purpose, but it is designed to prepare forces for deployment to Afghanistan. By recreating the high intensity and the low intensity environments, these three training evolutions seek to duplicate the conditions encountered by forces in today's security environment.

Despite the improvements in Marine Corps training, a binary approach still exists. Marines preparing to deploy in support of a RCC rotate through training stations with specific learning objectives. Training tends to focus, often for security reasons, on either high-intensity live-fire training or low-intensity scenarios, not on a combination of the two. This bifurcation of training results in Marines who view high-end and low-end scenarios as separate events. This perspective stands in stark contrast to what is actually encountered in support of RCCs: a constantly changing environment that could begin with high-intensity conflict and end with negotiations with a local leader. The unintended effect of separating

high-and low-intensity training is a Marine who, once he has embarked upon a high-intensity scenario, will stay in a high-intensity mindset until a high-intensity solution is achieved.

The USMC training improvements must be taken one step further by combining low- and high-intensity training scenarios into the same event. Integrated training will force U.S. troops to develop the skills and mental flexibility that will allow them to rapidly make the transition between each form of conflict experienced on today's battlefield. Such training must deal with the same factor affecting an increased emphasis on PME: time. The post-Vietnam mindset is still heavily entrenched in today's military. Many still believe that troops well trained in high-intensity conflict will by default be capable in a low intensity environment. This mindset results in the mistrust of any program that takes time away from high intensity training as the key to success in any military operation. Some might argue that by integrating low intensity scenarios into what are historically high intensity training evolutions, we run the risk of diluting our high intensity skills. As with an increased emphasis placed on PME, this concern is valid. However, it does not outweigh the potentially damaging effects that one improperly trained individual can have on a military campaign. A training program that is comprised of distinct and separate low-intensity and high-intensity training blocks runs the risk of creating Marines who continue to look for a kinetic solution to a problem that is best solved with cultural sensitivities. This tendency can result in strategic consequences that cause an otherwise well-developed operational plan to fail.

By integrating low and high intensity scenarios into the same training evolutions, U.S. forces will provide RCCs with troops trained under realistic scenarios and able to effectively execute operational plans that support today's security environment. Integrating

training will further reduce the failure of operational plans due to the actions of a single poorly trained soldier.

Flexible Doctrine

The current security environment is a far cry from that of the Cold War. During this period operational planning was developed to exploit the weakness discovered in the well-known doctrine of our Cold War opponents. In contrast, current RCCs must conduct operations against forces that often lack any formalized theory. Thus, the execution of operational plans has become more difficult without an enemy doctrine to exploit. Lacking insight into the enemy's planning and execution methods, RCCs must be able to rapidly adjust the methods for U.S. forces to employ to counter these unconventional threats.

The experience of German military leadership during the winter of 1916-17 best illustrates the benefits afforded by the ability to adapt doctrine. Faced with the realities of a battle of attrition with Western forces that had access to more resources, German leadership developed the elastic defense in depth. This defense represented a departure from a philosophy that measured success based solely on the ability to hold terrain to a philosophy that placed an emphasis on conserving manpower.²⁹ Although Germany failed to achieve its political objectives in WWI, its rapid development and application of new doctrinal concepts resulted in highly successful German defensive operations in the following months.³⁰

Current U.S. leadership recognizes the value of forces that can adapt. The *Multi-Service Concept for Irregular Warfare*, co-authored by the Marine Corps and Special Operations Command, continues to emphasize the need to remain flexible. It states that planners who are accustomed to thinking in conventional terms must stretch their

imagination.³¹ Additionally, forces in support of RCCs must embrace a circular pattern of “learn, design, relearn, redesign” which requires a highly flexible and rapid approach to campaign planning and execution.³² Recently, RCCs have stated that the ability to remain effective depends on the ability to “evolve our techniques and procedures to find, fix, finish, and exploit targets.”³³ This ability to adapt and evolve allows commanders to make rapid adjustments in executing military operations.

Once again the Soviet campaign in Afghanistan provides a useful lesson: the danger of rigid doctrine. At its campaign’s conclusion, the Soviet Army had lost 26,000 soldiers, compared to 1.3 million Afghans.³⁴ Despite the disparity in casualties, the Soviet Army was never able to achieve major operational success against the Mujahideen’s guerilla force. The nature of the Afghan tribal structure and its unique methods of warfare combined with its lack of one single center of power, prevented the Soviets from achieving success with their conventional tactics.³⁵ The inefficiency of Soviet tactics was compounded by Soviet leaders who were slow to change their operating doctrine or adapt to the terrain.³⁶ Although the Soviets eventually introduced weapons and tactics that could respond to the guerilla methods, these changes were too late to salvage the outcome of the Soviets’ Afghanistan campaign.

In contrast to the Soviets, U.S. forces have demonstrated some degree of flexibility. The history of the USMC is marked by leadership able to adapt to changes in the security environment. Many of the USMC’s successes have revolved around the ability to innovate and adapt to challenges on and off the battlefield. The Marine Corps’ development of the *Small Wars Manual*, *Maneuver Warfare*, as well as its standardization of amphibious operations during World War II highlights this characteristic.

Recent history demonstrates that the USMC can still adapt to meet new challenges. In response to the February 22, 2006 bombing of the Askiri mosque in Samarra, Marine leadership developed an innovative approach for dealing with insurgent forces.³⁷ At the time, ground forces were spread so thin that the open waterways and deserts of the Al Anbar province served as easily trafficable lines of communication (LOCs) for insurgent forces. Faced with the reality that they would not receive additional forces to sever the insurgent LOCs, Marine leadership created the Aero Scout mission.

This mission was comprised of attack and transport helicopters incorporated with an organic ground force. Pairing a ground force with attack and transport helicopters allowed a small force to cover a large area. Although pairing ground forces with aviation assets is not a new concept, Aero Scout was a departure from accepted Marine Corps doctrine because it assigned tactical control of the entire force to the attack helicopter pilot. The command relationship between the attack helicopter pilot and the commander of the ground force represented a significant departure from the standard supporting-supported relationship exercised by all other Marine forces, defined by aviation units in a more subordinate role. The Aero Scout mission enabled attack helicopter pilots who had become highly familiar with their working area to rapidly deploy ground forces to investigate suspicious activity. This mission allowed USMC forces to affect areas of the Al Anbar province that were previously inaccessible due to the limited number of ground personnel.

The Aero Scout mission enjoyed immediate success not only by denying insurgent forces a sanctuary but also through capturing high value individuals. Unfortunately, despite its immediate success, its employment came to a halt once the individuals that had developed the concept rotated out of theatre. Although the Aero Scout mission had been approved at

the General officer level, it did not make its way into doctrine or a formalized publication. As a result, once new units arrived in theatre, the Aero Scout concept had to be resubmitted through the lengthy and cumbersome approval process. While it was undergoing its second and third examination, insurgent forces resumed their use of the desert and water ways to support their criminal activities.³⁸ Although the USMC demonstrated the ability to adapt to a difficult situation, doctrine was not flexible enough to rapidly incorporate this change.

As the Aero Scout example shows, unfortunately, our “learn, design, relearn, redesign” process is too slow. Unlike the previously described German process from WWI that was able to take a new concept and then quickly incorporate it into doctrine, the Marine process has proven more cumbersome. In the case of the Aero Scout, Marine leadership was unable to redesign doctrine before new units arrived in theatre. Because the Aero Scout was a concept with which the new leaders were unfamiliar, they took the conservative approach and began a lengthy evaluation process. While that process was underway, Aero Scout operations were put on hold, allowing insurgents to resume their activities.

Clearly, there is a risk associated with doctrine that is too flexible. Doctrine that is always in the process of being rewritten can cause confusion by preventing military personnel from ever determining what doctrine actually is. Additionally, an approval process that prevents immature ideas from making their way into publication must be in place. On the other hand, although there are risks associated with doctrine that is too flexible, the risk associated with a process that is too bureaucratic is far greater. As previously discussed, the Soviet experience in Afghanistan illustrates the risks associated with a rigid and inflexible system. The Red Army was made vulnerable to a vastly inferior military force because of its inability to rapidly adapt to the enemy and to the environment. In order to meet the RCCs

requirement for forces that can rapidly evolve techniques and procedures, Marine leadership must become more flexible with respect to incorporating new doctrine. The process of ‘learn and redesign’, whether dealing with a tactical or operational issue, must exist on a timeline that is short enough for the same commander to review a new concept and submit it for approval. Although the Aero Scout mission was a tactical solution to a problem Marine units encountered, its outcome represents the disadvantages conventional units face when they are unable to adapt at a rate commensurate with their unconventional adversaries. Without flexible doctrine, RCCs will continue to play catch-up with non-conventional opponents who are not required to endure a bureaucratic process to evolve their methods.

Conclusion

The Soviet experience in Afghanistan is an example of a powerful army that failed to achieve operational success against a far less capable enemy. Soviet planners made several mistakes during operational planning that contributed to their eventual defeat. The actions of improperly trained Soviet conscripts worsened the impact of poor Soviet operational planning. The Soviets’ inability to rapidly adjust their doctrine was the last of several factors that led to their withdrawal.

Today’s RCCs face an even more demanding environment than that experienced by the Soviets. In order to enhance today’s RCC with the ability to successfully plan and execute military operations in the current environment, the U.S. must develop forces with three attributes: operational planners with foreign language and cultural competency, troops trained to operate and make the transition between low and high intensity scenarios, and flexible doctrine. By providing forces defined by these characteristics, RCCs will gain

operational planners able to assess the nature of the enemy, and they will reduce the risk of losing a well-planned military operation due to the actions of poorly trained troops. Finally, when appropriate, the RCC will have the ability to adjust doctrine rapidly to meet the shifting challenges of irregular forces.

Recommendations

In order to provide RCCs with operational planners that possess linguistic and cultural competency three changes must be made. First, a formalized training program must begin at the start of an officer's career and continue through his/her professional development. Second, a training continuum must link each level of formalized schooling. Third, every operational unit must have a formalized PME program that provides the educational background needed by officers who are unable to attend resident schools.

In addition, to provide RCCs with forces that are properly trained, two adjustments must occur. First, training environments that better mimic the situations encountered on today's battlefield must be created. Second, as these training scenarios are created, they must include both high and low intensity scenarios.

Finally, to enable the RCC to rapidly adjust doctrine, a mechanism that strengthens our 'learn and redesign' process must be created to follow a twelve-month cycle. The adjustment of doctrine inside of twelve months will allow changes to be made before commanders involved in the process are relieved by their successors.

By incorporating these changes, the U.S. will provide RCCs with forces that are able to effectively plan and execute military operations as well as adapt to the rapidly changing, unconventional threats encountered on today's battlefield. With forces that possess these

characteristics and resources, the U.S. will reduce the likelihood of joining the history books with armies, like Alexander the Great's, who were defeated by far less capable enemies.

Notes

(All notes appear in shortened form. For full details, see the appropriate entry in the bibliography.)

¹ Shultz and Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists, and Militias*, 176.

² Ibid, 147.

³ Ibid, 156.

⁴ Ibid, 147.

⁵ Ibid, 168.

⁶ Marine Concepts for a Changing Security Environment, 55.

⁷ Ibid, 55

⁸ Ibid, 55

⁹ Naval Operations Concept, 5.

¹⁰ Posture statement of U.S. Central Command, 9.

¹¹ Ibid, 10.

¹² *MCDP-1 Warfighting*, 38.

¹³ Ibid, 16

¹⁴ Shultz and Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists, and Militias*, 170.

¹⁵ Ibid, 170.

¹⁶ Ibid, 171.

¹⁷ Ibid, 171.

¹⁸ Ibid, 171.

¹⁹ GS12 John DeForest (Deputy Academics Officer, Basic Officer Course), interview by author, 26 Mar 2008.

²⁰ Captain Matt Danner (Former Instructor at the Infantry Officer Course), interview by author, 13 Mar 2008.

²¹ Naval Operations Concept, 30.

²² Shultz and Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists, and Militias*, 25-6.

²³ Marine Concepts for a Changing Security Environment, 55.

²⁴ Ibid, 55.

²⁵ Posture statement of U.S. Central Command, 9.

²⁶ Naval Operations Concept, 6.

²⁷ *MCDP-1 Warfighting*, 53-61

²⁸ Shultz and Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists, and Militias*, 171.

²⁹ Wray, *Standing Fast: German Defensive Doctrine on the Russian Front During World War II*, 1-5.

³⁰ Ibid, 5.

³¹ Multi Service Concept for Irregular Warfare, 12.

³² Ibid, 12.

³³ Posture statement of U.S. Central Command, 10.

³⁴ Shultz and Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists, and Militias*, 147

³⁵ Ibid, 149-156

³⁶ Ibid, 171

³⁷ Hackett, Aero Scout (Tactical Innovation in Al Anbar Province), 1.

³⁸ LtCol Scott Jensen (Former Commanding Officer of HMLA-269), interview by the author, 20 March 2008.

Bibliography

Fallon, William, Admiral J. "Posture Statement of the United States Central Command." U.S. CENTCOM. <http://www.centcom.mil/en/404/5.html> (accessed 20 Mar. 2008).

Hackett, Jon, LtCol. "Aero Scout (Tactical Innovation in Al Anbar Province)," (unpublished article, n.d.).

Long War Concept. United States Marine Corps.

[https://www.marcent.usmc.mil/nipr/content/g5/Long%20War%20Concept_Brief_Unclass_%20Web%20Version.ppt#256,1,Long War Concept The Marine Corps Vision for Strategic Force Employment ISO the Steady State Security Posture](https://www.marcent.usmc.mil/nipr/content/g5/Long%20War%20Concept_Brief_Unclass_%20Web%20Version.ppt#256,1,Long%20War%20Concept%20The%20Marine%20Corps%20Vision%20for%20Strategic%20Force%20Employment%20ISO%20the%20Steady%20State%20Security%20Posture)(accessed 2 April 2008).

McMaster, H. R. "On War: Lessons to Be Learned." Survival 50 (2008): 19-30.

Schultz Jr., Richard H., and Andrea J. Dew. Insurgents Terrorists and Militias the Warriors of Contemporary Combat. New York: Columbia UP, 2006.

The United States of America. Department of Defense. The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America. Mar. 2005.

http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/dod/nds-usa_mar2005.htm(accessed 31 March 2008).

United States of America. Headquarters United States Marine Corps. Department of the Navy. MCDP 1 Warfighting. Washington D.C., 1997.

The United States of America. United States Marine Corps. Marine Corps Concepts for a Changing Security Environment. June 2007.

[http://www.mcwl.usmc.mil/concepts/ServiceConcepts/Marine%20Corps%20Operating%20Concepts%20for%20Changed%20Security%20Environment%20\(Final\).pdf](http://www.mcwl.usmc.mil/concepts/ServiceConcepts/Marine%20Corps%20Operating%20Concepts%20for%20Changed%20Security%20Environment%20(Final).pdf)(accessed 1 April 2008).

United States of America. United States Navy. Naval Operations Concept. 2006.

<http://www.centcom.mil/en/404/5.html>(accessed 19 Mar 2008).

The United States of America. U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Special Operations Command. Multi-Service Concept for Irregular Warfare. 2006.

Wray, Timothy, Maj A., comp. Standing Fast: German Defensive Doctrine on the Russian Front During World War II. Sept. 1986. United States Army Command and General Staff College. 10 Apr. 2008 <<http://www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/wray/wray.asp>>.