Army Culture

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2nd Edition

Seeking Balance: US Army Culture and Professionalism in the 21st Century

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Headquarters, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command
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Executive Summary

Any serious discussion of Army culture must consider not only its historical context but its current one as well. For nearly eight years of war in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Army’s professional culture has served as a source of strength and resiliency. Despite this, recent history and, in particular, the strain of war has revealed that Army decisions before and during the war have positioned the generating force against the operating force during times of high stress. These decisions, and the conditions surrounding them (i.e., a force that is over-committed and under-resourced), have created tensions in Army culture. The paper examines those decisions and conditions.

When an institution is under pressure for extended periods of time, protection of the institution’s centers of excellence sustains the professional culture (i.e., its ethos, integrity, credibility, competence, and coherence) and allows the institution to bounce back. We argue that these centers of excellence serve as the backbone to the operating force and therefore senior Army leaders ought to increase the percentage of officers and NCOs in the generating force.

In the course of writing this paper about professional culture of the US Army, the authors based their analysis on a series of interviews conducted with 250 officers, NCOs, and experts as well as a review of relevant secondary literature. As such, the essay is organized into four sections. The first section explores cultural tensions present in the Army prior to September 11, 2001. The second section discusses how the past eight years of war may have exacerbated those cultural tensions. The Third section of the paper identifies emerging behaviors that offer a way forward. In the fourth section, the essay concludes by offering eight recommendations as catalysts for discussion, debate, and further inquiry among senior Army leaders and others concerned about the health of Army culture. These are:

- continue Army-wide discussion about culture and incorporate initial findings into the Army Capstone Concept;
- communicate clearly to the force the behaviors and practices that we want to reinforce and those that we want to change;
- balance an inculcation of the warrior ethos with moral, ethical, and psychological preparation for operations against hybrid threats in and amongst the population;
- encourage risk-taking and decentralization consistent with mission command. Ensure that risk management does not create risk aversion;
- determine how to preserve unit cohesion and the chain of command during ARFORGEN transitions;
- narrow the gap between the operating and generating forces with priority to organizations where the Army does its thinking, procuring, and leader development; and
- increase the intellectual rigor of leader development and education; and
- effect changes to the Army personnel system that provide more opportunities for and reward education (e.g., Leader Development Strategy)

Finally, several annexes provide additional resources and contexts from which to consider this complicated topic.
Introduction: Seeking a Balance in US Army Culture

“The balance we are striving for is... between retaining those cultural traits that have made the United States armed forces successful by inspiring and motivating the people within them, and shedding those cultural elements that are barriers to doing what needs to be done.”

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Speech to the National Defense University, September 2008

Secretary Gates’ remarks signify an important milestone for the Joint and Service communities. As they seek to balance their institutional cultures in the years ahead, the Army will undoubtedly do the same. This paper is part of that process and a response to senior Army leader discussions which focused on the effects of recent and ongoing wartime experience on Army culture. This experience suggests that the tensions in our professional culture—those that pre-dated the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—have been exacerbated by eight years of combat. These tensions positioned the generating force against the operating force, and, as a result, created a perceived gap in the Army’s culture that is among the most pressing issues facing senior Army leaders today. This is our primary thesis of the study.

To apply a proper context for the paper, we begin by examining contemporary Army culture. In doing so, we had to affix boundaries in order to scope the study. FM-1, The Army, and FM 6-22 Army Leadership, provide those initial boundaries with a description and definition of Army culture. Additionally, our culture does not exist in isolation and must be understood to fall within the influences of American society at large and the Joint community. Finally, Army culture, within the scope of this paper, is viewed from a recent historical context, roughly the time period beginning with the All-Volunteer force.

Following a brief contextual examination of Army culture, we turn next to the tensions that existed prior to the current wars. As early as 1989 and before Desert Storm, the Army’s culture was coming under pressure from a variety of external sources: the mandatory drawdown of US forces after the end of the Cold War, an environment of decreasing budgetary resources, and the geo-strategic realities of the global environment were changing national policies and foreign policy priorities. These external pressures were amplified by a number of internal pressures and created the cultural tensions that would be exposed to war.

The second section examines these pre-existing tensions brought about by external and internal pressures under the lens of war. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are important because they serve not only as a source to highlight pre-existing tensions, but also as a turning point in Army culture. The interventions in the 1990s conducted on the basis of “Go Fast, Go First, Go Home” quickly gave way to protracted counterinsurgency operations. This turning point is significant on many levels, but for the purposes of the paper it also affects how these pre-existing tensions have been exacerbated by years of war.

The final section of the paper discusses pre-war and war time tensions with implications for the future. Undoubtedly, there are areas where change is needed. However, the story of contemporary Army culture is positive, random perceptions and pejorative remarks notwithstanding. Certainly tensions exist, but tensions in and of themselves can serve as
instruments of positive change. For example, the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have created leaders and soldiers who are comfortable operating outside their units’ missions and organization demonstrating the tactical adaptability that is now a common cultural trait in the operating force. Moreover, repeated combat missions in ambiguous environments have created this culture of adaptability. These positive behaviors and traits show that the Army culture does adapt to the changing uncertainties in the operating environment. The question becomes, Can Army culture shed unwanted cultural traits it inherited during the pre-war years, and will it be in a position to adapt quickly for the next conflict?

Several annexes are provided as additional resources and as context. Annex A, Towards Achieving Desired Outcomes, highlights specific recommendations for senior Army leaders as a starting point for discourse. Annex B, The Historical Context of Army Culture, 1973-2001, examines how organizational culture shaped an All-Volunteer Army. Annex C, US Army Culture: A British Perspective, gives and insightful and objective look at Army culture from a strategic stakeholder perspective. Annex D, Recommended Reading List, provides the secondary sources used in this study. Annex E, Methodological Overview, outlines the approach taken by the paper to examine Army culture. And Annex F, To Change an Army (Military Review, March 1983), provides a timeless examination of how reform in an institution as large as the Army is problematic under the best of circumstances.

Contemporary Army Culture

The study’s analysis rests on a variety of sources, including a wide-ranging review of relevant literature, studies, and professional correspondence about culture. The information garnered from this secondary literature is augmented by a series of interviews and sensing sessions conducted with over 250 different officers, non-commissioned officers, scholars, and military experts. In short, these in-depth discussions represent the evidentiary base of this study. Of note, however, is the deliberate omission of broader civil-military (political) issues that the Army is facing and will face in the near future: women in combat, gays, suicides, alcohol, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other related mental health issues. We have also omitted the examination of how the Army fits into the broader defense culture, and how Army culture compares, contrasts, or complements other armed forces’ cultures, particularly from a strategic alliance perspective.

Despite this extensive set of sources, any cultural study is, by definition, a complex topic and a difficult analysis. When it comes to culture, there are no direct—and more importantly no discrete—answers. Moreover, the Army’s culture is far from monolithic, there are numerous competing values and beliefs within the Army’s organizational culture. For example, branch subcultures also offer important cultural variations as do the differences between the generating force and the operating force. The mere presence of subcultures—or even cultural paradoxes and tension—is not necessarily bad. In fact, these subcultures and their diversity could very well be a source of strength to the larger Army culture (such as the Ranger creed offering inspiration to the Warrior’s creed or the cavalry’s élan and general attitude in the fight for information). By extension, diversity between the generating and operating forces can also be a source of strength to Army culture.
Beginning with FM 6-22, Army Leadership, Army culture is defined as: “The set of long-held values, beliefs, expectations, and practices (VBEP) shared by a group that signifies what is important and influences how an organization operates.”

The Army’s role in American society is also an important source of our military culture. In FM-1, The Army, describes the history and values that have shaped the enduring elements of Army culture. As the manual clearly states, “The Army, a long-trusted institution, exists to serve the Nation. As part of the joint force, the Army supports and defends America’s Constitution and way of life against all enemies, foreign and domestic.”

There are additional sources that shape Army culture. First, Army culture is grounded in its purpose and is based, in large measure, on a vision of how the Army fights wars—the kind of war that the Army envisions has an impact on what it means to be a warrior. This is critically important when placed within current and near-future contexts. Concern about “hybrid threats”—the diverse and dynamic combinations of regular and irregular forces, both conventional and unconventional, as well as criminal elements, all unified in purpose—dominate current thinking about future armed conflict. This threat-based thinking as well as its associated vision of future war must continue to be an important part of Army organizational culture. And finally, US Army culture is also grounded in its identity as protector of the Nation. Although the role of the US Army has obviously transformed over time, the Army’s basis of service to the nation—manifest in everything from the Constitution to the Army Values—has remained constant.

Pre-Existing Cultural Tensions

The cultural tensions within today’s Army did not develop in a vacuum—their roots reside in the recent history of the All-Volunteer Force (See Annex B, The Historical Context of Army Culture, 1973-2001). These tensions are at the heart of a nuanced understanding of current Army culture. As social psychologist Edgar Schein highlighted, not all cultural “assumptions are mutually compatible or consistent with each other.” He continued, “If we observe inconsistency and lack of order, we can assume that we are . . . observing a conflict among several cultures or subcultures.” Since cultural tension frequently results from conflicting behaviors that reflect competing values or evolving cultural norms, such tension is often a fundamental cause of change. As a result, cultural tension itself is neither bad nor good; it can, however, be creative or destructive. The preliminary findings of this study—findings which should be studied further—indicate that a tension between the generating force and the operating force existed prior to the onset of hostilities marked by September 11, 2001.

In a series of works originating in the late-1990s, Professor Don Snider asked a simple, yet profound question: Is the Army a profession or a bureaucracy? Basing his research on a number of studies and surveys, Snider artfully addressed the rhetorical question of a frustrated field grade officer, “How can I be a professional if there is no profession?” The resulting analysis posited that the Army (and in particular the officer corps) maintained a tension-filled duality. This duality consisted of elements of professionalism as well as traces of bureaucracy. The implications of this phenomenon were important—they affected issues such as the tendency to value efficiency over effectiveness, to prioritize the centralization of an institutional hierarchy and centralized bureaucracy over decentralized initiative and operations, as well as to elevate the practices of management and process over leadership and action. Whether or not these trends
directly mirrored reality paled in comparison to the pervasive perceptions that this was the true values, beliefs, expectations, and practices of the US Army. Importantly, Snider’s work, conducted in coordination with a collection of well-respected soldier-scholars, highlights that these tensions were not a result of the war. In fact, this duality dates back to a break that began to emerge in the early 1990s.

At the same time that the Army was wrestling with the duality of its professional identity, it also experienced a disturbing series of developments concerning its conceptualization of war. The product of these developments was likely due to unchallenged assumptions about the nature of future warfare. Like the questions concerning the nature of the Army profession, debates over the nature of future warfare would also affect the values, beliefs, expectations, and practices of the US Army. In effect, these assumptions affected the Army’s culture in the turbulent period following Operation Desert Storm.

Even before Desert Storm, the Army’s organizational culture was coming under pressure as Congress began the drawdown of US forces after the end of the Cold War. In this environment of decreasing budgetary resources, the Army faced a dilemma. The Army had to maintain its relevancy and it had to do so with significant resources savings and minimal casualties. In the immediate wake of the operational success of Desert Storm, many defense intellectuals stressed the importance of airpower, speed, and precision—concepts that could be increased in their effect by an order of magnitude through the application of information technology. This shift in thinking marked the emergence of a belief in an approaching information-based revolution in military affairs (RMA).

This significant shift occurred at the same time that the geo-strategic realities of the global environment were also changing national policies and foreign policy priorities. Conceptually, the generating force remained focused on fighting a series of Major Regional Conflicts against a conventional force even as the operational Army confronted a series of stability operations in complex environments. Even within the operational force, significant segments of junior, mid-level, and senior officers actively disparaged the notion of stability operations, possibly because they were not properly educated or trained. As a result, at a time of significant geo-strategic change, the Army, already showing signs of imbalance, was slow to revise its Cold War ‘aim point’ to reflect the technological predilections of the RMA.

As a result, the Army became beholden to a collection of ideas that offered the illusion that technology offered a panacea to the problem of armed conflict. This was a fundamentally flawed and ahistorical understanding of future conflict. With all of its promises about the potential power of “information,” the concept failed to recognize the continuity of the political nature of war and the limits of technology. The concept failed to account for the social and psychological dimension of combat, the very dimension that historian John Keegan described was perhaps the continuity in war.

What battles have in common is human: the behavior of men struggling to reconcile their instinct for self-preservation, their sense of honour and the achievement of some aim over which other men are ready to kill the, The study of battle is therefore always a study of fear and usually of courage; always of leadership, usually of obedience; always of compulsion, sometimes of insubordination; always of anxiety, sometimes of elation or catharsis; always of uncertainty and doubt, misinformation and misapprehension, usually also of faith and sometimes of vision; always of violence, sometimes also of cruelty, self-sacrifice, compassion; above all, it is
always a study of solidarity and usually also of disintegration—for it is toward the disintegration of human
groups that battle is directed.\textsuperscript{13}

The beliefs associated with network-centric warfare—not to mention the revolutionary zeal that
many advocates of the RMA demonstrated—reflected a serious imbalance in a key part of Army
culture: how Officers and Soldiers conceptualized war. Moreover, these flawed assumptions
about the future of war manifested themselves in a very real way as they affected \textit{materiel and
force structure development}. The most prominent material acquisition programs focused on
enhancing command and control. Meanwhile, soldier and fighting vehicle initiatives were
secondary. Such developments, occurring throughout the mid-1990s, stood in stark contrast with
the requirements and the experience of the operational force in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo.
As a result, the notion of network-centric war, with its emphasis on material, information, and
technology, served to \textit{dehumanize} both war and the Army culture.

The notion of the RMA brought with it the equally problematic belief that war could be
waged efficiently with a minimalist approach to the commitment of forces and other resources.
This idea of combat efficiency—and not combat effectiveness—mixed with similar bureaucratic
traits emerging throughout the remainder of the generating force. As a result, this type of
thinking interacted with the bureaucratized aspects of the generating force and treated war as a
“targeting process.” In addition to their numerous implications on the Army’s culture, these
developments served to separate the tactical and operational actions of war with the political
aims of strategy and policy.\textsuperscript{14}

The emphasis on the “process” of network-centric warfare also had a significant effect on \textit{how
the Army trained and educated leaders}. In short, as the historian Brian Linn points out in his
book \textit{Echo of Battle}, both training and education suffered from rigidity of thought. Within
significant portions of the Army’s Professional Military Education (PME) system, the Army did
not balance its need to develop leaders capable of tactical success versus the needs of the
institution for leaders capable of operating in the strategic, or the civil-military environment of
policy and bureaucracy. In fact, the majority of the curricula’s emphasis focused almost
exclusively on the former. Likewise, the combat training centers focused on centralized staff
processes and battle management techniques, such as the Military Decision-Making Process
(MDMP), the targeting process, and synchronization matrices. Unfortunately, this emphasis
came at the expense of commander-centric training necessary for decentralized operations,
seizing the initiative in a variety of environments, taking prudent risks, and innovating with
tactical formations and techniques. Further, the length of intensive training rotations encouraged
officers to conceptualize conflict as one short, violent, technologically-infused battle against a
similarly rigid-thinking foe. The assumption—one directly associated with the notion of
RMA—that there was no near-term peer competitor to the military power of the United States
only served to stifle initiative and experimentation as well as to reinforce these emergent cultural
traits.\textsuperscript{15}

Dissonance in the Army’s training and leadership development was matched by \textit{dissonance in
the human dimension} of the Army’s organizational culture. Multiple Selective Early
Retirement Boards and Reduction in Force actions in the early 1990s were a tremendously
traumatic experience for the officer corps. Promotion rates were cut.\textsuperscript{16} The Army’s “up or out”
policies, enshrined in the Defense Officer Personnel management Act of 1980, and a strict
adherence to officer progression timelines aided in reducing the size of the officer corps as part of the post-Cold War drawdown. Yet, these policies brought with them several significant unintended consequences. Many officers perceived that the way to survive these drawdowns and have a successful career was to follow a prescribed career timeline focused on their branch’s assessment of the best assignments for developing technical and tactical competence in that branch. Surveys and interviews of service college students in the mid-1990s revealed that careerism within the officer corps had increased along with growing concerns about negative command climates and “zero defects” mentalities.17

By the late 1990s, the pains of the drawdown had been replaced by a growing retention problem among junior officers, perhaps the most telling indicator of dissonance in the Army’s organizational culture.18 According to Leonard Wong, the Army’s organizational culture caused a significant portion of young officers to conclude that a career in the Army was unappealing and incongruous with the lives of job-satisfaction, self-fulfillment, and balance that they desired.19 At the same time, market forces within the US economy placed a high value on managers that possessed attributes present in many junior officers, making them highly desirable in the corporate world. In fact, as the final report on the Army Training and Leadership Development Panel emerged in 2001, a combination of both internal and external factors were placing the officer corps and the Army’s institutional culture under increasing strain.20

Moreover, the retention problem became so acute that by the late-1990s, the promotion rates began to increase dramatically.

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<th>FY03 % PZ Select</th>
<th>FY04 % PZ Select</th>
<th>FY05 % PZ Select</th>
<th>FY06 % PZ Select</th>
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<td>98.9%</td>
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<td>98.4%</td>
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Table 1. “If everyone is a superstar, how do you differentiate who should get ahead?” Promotion Rates of the 21st Century and the Erosion of Meritocracy. This table depicts the DOPMA promotion goals and actual PZ selection rates from FY 02-FY 07. It is important to note that these high promotion rates, combined with wartime strains, and the emphasis on manning deployable, modular units, have diluted the overall quality of the Army Officer Corps. Sensing session remarks brought the point in stark relief. One officer remarked: “How we treat officers comes too close to egalitarianism.”21

The corresponding decline in officer quality associated with these inflated promotion rates was not lost on significant segments of the officer corps.22 In short, the Army’s personnel management practices throughout the 1990s did not seem to match the Army’s stated values about the worth of people.
The combination of these events—and the Army’s reaction to them—led to increasing civilianization of the generating force. One of the Army’s responses to the personnel resource dilemma that was emerging in the mid-1990s was the privatization of generating force functions. Importantly, an area heavily populated by civilian contractors was the very place where the profession did its thinking and teaching. Thus, in the early 1990s the Army fully funded its training, leader development, and doctrine formulation—all key elements of the generating force—despite cutting personnel from these areas. The result was that by the mid-1990s more and more key institutional functions were being assigned to private contractors rather than military personnel. Many ROTC instructor positions were filled with contractors, as were key billets in concept, material, and doctrinal development. A similar pattern occurred at the Command and General Staff College. Even the construction of after-action reviews and lessons learned products were increasingly filled by civilian contractors. Many of these measures were undertaken under the auspices of the “Manning the Force” initiative of the late-1990s, which had the goal of supporting the operational force by improving its manpower levels. However, this initiative also reduced the number of operational Army officers that could bring their recent experiences to the training base and made generating force positions appear less attractive to officers in the operational Army.

Figure 2. “How do you change the institutional Army when TRADOC is manned at 60%?” Historical ROTC Instructor Fill Rates. Reports from interviews and sensing sessions suggest that there is a direct correlation between uniformed—and educated—officers and NCOs in instructor positions and the quality of education. Much of this quality comes from the informal relationships and bonds that are as much a part of inspiring student officers as they are in educating them. Role modeling and mentorship are still important expectations, even though many participants in our sensing sessions remarked that they are becoming increasingly rare opportunities in practice. As LTG (Ret) Richard Trefry remarked, “a big problem in culture is officers fighting to stay away from institutions and education.” Another participant in a sensing session put the same point in harsher terms: “We have contracted out the Army and because of that, we are losing our culture.”

These internal developments mixed with a broader phenomenon developing throughout America that involved our society’s assumptions about the nature of risk. In short, by the mid-
The political scientist Christopher Coker has written persuasively about *War in the Age of Risk*. In his book of that title, Coker highlights that risk is “the definitive theme of the age;” risk is our society’s *Zeitgeist*. More importantly, Coker argues that “war has become risk management in all but name” and that “risk aversion is now so entrenched in the collective consciousness that we tend to write off almost all risk-taking as abnormal, or pathological.” Our society’s preoccupation with risk and risk management is so pervasive that the topic is rarely discussed or even noticed. Yet Coker’s thesis was echoed by numerous participants in this study’s sensing sessions. Moreover, Coker argues persuasively that the “risk society’s” greatest threat is its own fixation on safety.

The nature of the Army’s own perceptions of operations throughout the 1990s also contributed to the development of *risk aversion*. Repeated deployments to Somalia, Kuwait, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo dramatically increased the Army operational tempo throughout the 1990s. This added multiple points of strain on the institution and exacerbated the growing tension between the generating force and the operating forces. Further, during these deployments, military leaders of all ranks became increasingly *risk averse* due to demands by their political authorities to avoid casualties and mistakes (i.e., fight and win but with no casualties). Interestingly, this fear grew far beyond accidents or incidents that might occur abroad. The fear of mistakes also included an uneasiness that spread across a whole host of Army activities, whether it was command and staff issues or company DWIs. The nexus of risk aversion and the communications technology that came with the suite of equipment to support the on-going RMA only served to increase the perception of micro-management and “over-control” by senior leaders.

The Army’s cultural tensions also coincided with a downturn in *civil-military relations* throughout the 1990s. Throughout the course of a distinguished public and academic career, Richard H. Kohn has highlighted the tensions between military officers and their civilian superiors. According to Kohn, the officer corps’ “understanding of its proper role in government and society” is critical to effective policy making. In centuries past, the officer corps understood the criticality of remaining “not only non-partisan but un-partisan” or existing “completely outside party politics.” As such, the military professional’s role is to provide civilian leaders his best advice, not to advocate for a particular policy or program. Moreover, Kohn emphasizes that “partisanship is a cancer in the military.” According to Kohn, what is “even more disturbing than partisanship,” are the calls “for the military to stand up to civilians who are ignoring or deciding against military judgment—to the point of speaking out or otherwise preventing a decision from going forward, or resigning to alert the public to a disaster in the making.”

Unfortunately, like so many other elements of the Army’s professional culture in the 1990s, a tension developed within civil-military relations over the increasing trend of senior military officers to advocate for particular policies and programs. Although the roots of the problem extend back to the memory of Vietnam—and of Robert Strange McNamara, in particular—the archetypal incident of US Civil-military relations occurred with the “Don’t ask, don’t tell” policy during the first weeks of the new administration over the topic of gays in the military.
To a certain degree, Army leaders recognized these tensions and the requisite need for change. As early as 2001, with the introduction of full spectrum operations in that year’s version of FM 3-0, Operations, Army were seeking balance in their operational conceptualization of war. More importantly, leaders began to initiate actions to resolve these issues. The results of this initial flurry of reactive measures, however, were mixed. Flawed assumptions about network-centric warfare, to include concepts such as “rapid decisive operations” and “effects based operations,” found their way into doctrine. Further, although the pages of Army and Military Review found themselves filled with official publications and articles about leadership and values, many in the Army felt that the discourse on values and culture, although growing in volume, had become less and less genuine and seemed more and more divorced from creating a warrior ethos. By the turn of the century a combination of factors and choices had, to some degree, civilized and dehumanized the Army’s professional culture. This contributed to the Army’s culture becoming out of balance with itself (See Figure 3). A mismatch emerged between the beliefs and practices of the Army’s culture. More importantly, tensions between the generating force and the operating force were clearly evident.

![Our Army Culture Is Outside the Band of Tolerance](image)

This development was not without irony—many generating force agencies were attempting to solve problems they perceived as germane to generating a future operational force. However, the events of the 1990s reflected a generating force that was drifting due to a belief that the Army was in an interregnum period in which it would face no peer competitor until 2020. But before Army leaders could fully assess what had happened and what might be done to rectify the divergent tensions within the professional culture, a series of significant events played out in New York City, Washington, D.C., and in rural Pennsylvania.
Cultural Tensions Exacerbated by Eight Years of Combat

This section departs from the discussion of pre-war cultural tensions and focuses on the tensions exacerbated by nearly eight years of combat. In doing so, there are six friction points specifically addressed: (1) abilities and limitations of technology, (2) need for “can-do” attitude versus problems associated with “do the best you can with what you have,” (3) centralization versus decentralization, (4) need to maintain warrior ethos versus need to operate among the population and safeguard non-combatants, (5) need for stoicism versus need to mitigate combat stress, and (6) how to educate the force in times of stress and high operations tempo (OPTEMPO). These first three tensions are pre-existing strains in Army culture that are now perceived to be exacerbated as a result of an Army at War. The last three tensions are endemic to war itself. Combined, these tensions provide insight to an Army culture at war, which will serve as the basis for future discussions and continued examinations.

The abilities and limitations of technology are the first tension that, as noted earlier, resulted from the premature reliance on the revolution in military affairs and the so-called “defense transformation” of the 1990s. Essentially, defense transformation was based on unchallenged assumptions about the nature of future war – that is, the belief that surveillance, communications, and information technologies would deliver dominant battlespace knowledge and permit US forces to achieve full spectrum dominance against any opponent mainly through the employment of precision-strike capabilities. This “mindset” emerged in TRADOC at the beginning of the decade and proceeded to capture the Army culture for several years into the Iraq war. For example, TRADOC’s annual Title 10 wargames (e.g., Army Transformation Wargame and Vigilant Warrior Wargame) echoed the 2003 Army Posture Statement claiming that the

“Army Knowledge Management (AKM) will accelerate the Detect-Decide-Deliver planning processes and enable warfighters to see the adversary first – before our force are detected; understand the Common Relevant Operating Picture (CROP) first; act against adversaries first; and finish the warfight with decisive victories – see first, understand first, act first, finish decisively.”

Additionally, Joint Vision documents (i.e., 2010 and 2020) idealized the characteristics of dominant battlespace knowledge and precision strike capabilities. Ironically, this posture statement and these vision documents were written while operating forces experienced lessons from Panama, Haiti, Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Despite this growing body of experience and evidence, however, senior military and political authorities were reluctant (or refused) to see the writing on the wall. Interestingly, during this time there was also a paradox. Didn’t the experiences of Desert Storm through the first year of the OEF provide evidence that technology and precision had value? In fact, the “Afghan Model” (i.e., US provided air and sea-based firepower combined with indigenous forces) was advertized to be the new standard for the conduct of war.

Several years before the “Afghan Model” surfaced, there were critics of technology and its associated effects on operational concepts; however, the number of critics were few (at first). General Donn Starry was prescient when he remarked in Military Review, ‘How to Change an Army’, that reformers, or those that challenge the prevailing thought, are typically outcasts and non-conformists.\(^{36}\) In 2001, U.S. Joint Forces Command initiated, planned, and executed the

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multi-million dollar wargame, *Millennium Challenge*. Lieutenant General (USMC ret.) Paul Van Riper, acting as one of the adversarial commanders, introduced a thinking adversary that nearly brought the technology-heavy, rapidly decisive operating friendly forces and the wargame to its knees. Millennium Challenge was a harbinger for the failed promises of dominant battlespace knowledge and precision fires. And General Van Riper was among a small contingent of senior military leaders who challenged the prevailing concepts and technologies.

This example serves to highlight that there are limitations to technology. No doubt many changes and initiatives are long overdue and the possibilities associated with emerging technologies are significant. Initiatives to develop and field new sensor, communications, and information management capabilities hold great promise for increasing the effectiveness of our military forces. The dramatic advances in command and control technologies, especially abilities to gain real-time access to imagery and maintain a clear picture of friendly forces have vastly improved the agility and interoperability of units. There is even one instance where “green” technologies are being used with impressive results; for example, a Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Iraq employed state-of-the-art solar and wind technologies to cut its fuel consumption by almost 70 percent (they even produced a surplus of electricity which they provided to a local community). Neurosciences and biotechnology are other areas where technology is making significant gains. Brain scanning knowledge is providing insights into the development of new models and simulations. Ray Kurzweil, the MIT futurist and entrepreneur, believes that by 2030, machines will operate cognitively at human levels. Neuroscientists are discovering that “emotions” play an equally important role in human decision making, judgment, and problem solving as does reasoning – an application which may provide insight into human societies and cultures.

Despite the promises of future technologies, there is a caution: technologies have not provided “the solution” to armed conflict despite some advocates’ promises to do so. Indeed, there is abundant historical evidence to support this. Generally speaking, technology cannot yet serve as a substitute for the human, psychological, and political dimensions in war. Furthermore, new (commercial) technologies typically enter the marketplace quickly and any comparative advantage they may have for military application are soon marginalized. Enemy forces in Afghanistan and Iraq employ traditional countermeasures to coalition technological capabilities – measures such as dispersion, concealment, deception and intermingling with civilian populations.

In December 2004, a soldier in Kuwait preparing to deploy into Iraq with his unit asked the visiting Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld why he and other soldiers had to search Kuwaiti junkyards to find improvised armor for their vehicles to protect against bomb blasts and small-arms attacks. Mr. Rumsfeld replied, “As you know, you go to war with the Army you have.” This brief anecdote introduces the second tension affecting Army culture – that is, the need for a “can-do” attitude versus problems associated with “do the best you can with what you have.”

That soldier’s question, however, marks a change in the established values and explicit practices in Army culture. In essence, there was the paradigmatic shift and emergence of a different kind of professional candor. Prior to OEF and OIF, issues of conformity and uncritical compliance to senior military and civil leaders were beginning to contrast with a new behaviors:
open questioning, criticism, and dissent. By mid-2006, the quantity of disaffection appearing in periodicals, op-eds, professional journals, and other on-line forums was beginning to increase. The archetype, of course, was LTC Yingling’s widely circulated article in the Armed Force Journal, “A Failure in Generalship.” Indeed, these articles began to question tactics, operational methods, and equipping issues due, in part, to the fact that “Young captains, lieutenants, and non-commissioned officers. . .had more combat experience than their peacetime-trained military seniors. . .”

Initially, this bottom-up challenge to the generating force had little effect. Not until dissent from the top-down emerged did real change in the generating force started to occur. As early as 2003, when Paul Wolfowitz openly dismissed the then-Army Chief of Staff’s testimony to Congress on troop strength, the military’s trust in civilian leadership began to decline. And by late 2005, the perceived strategic political-military relationships were becoming widely apparent as the then-Secretary of Defense re-established civilian authority coupled with his intolerance for dissent. Certainly there were other factors at work, e.g., the flawed assessments of the counterinsurgency environment in Iraq and the mishandling of detainees (Abu Ghraib, extraordinary renditions, etc.), but the die had already been cast.

In Army culture today, the “can-do” attitude is often at odds with the perceived constraints of deference to senior civilian and military authority held over from the Cold War institutional Army. The emergence of the freedom to question, criticize, and disagree are indications that Army culture is, in fact, changing. To illustrate this, a British liaison team stationed at TRADOC, Fort Monroe provided this insight: “. . . but the British do relish the questioning subordinate who not only questions privately but openly without fear . . . Too many American officers are unprepared to confront their seniors with unpalatable truths or contrary views. There is much less of a challenging process in the formulation of plans and even doctrine . . . Too many young staff officers are quick to comment ‘that is a great idea, sir’ rather than ‘I am not so sure.’”

The centralization and decentralization debate is the third tension affecting Army culture. Clearly, the Army is a hierarchical and centralized institution and will likely remain that way into the future. But given the changing nature of the strategic and operational environments, and eight years of continuous combat, there is a concurrent need to change how the Army fulfills its Title 10 USC roles and responsibilities.

How the Army and its culture became centralized is understandable when viewed in context. Briefly, General DuPey, the first TRADOC commander had a personal leadership philosophy that became the institutional culture of how to train. A product of his personal experiences, he believed that draftees and volunteers had to be trained differently than professional soldiers. This belief was due to the nature of conventional war in Central Europe (i.e., forward-deployed forces fighting outnumbered while reserves in the U.S. went through mobilization that transformed Guardsmen and reservists into combat-ready reinforcements), and that there was insufficient time and capacity to develop civilians into professional soldiers. As a result, the institution would have top-down and centralized hierarchies able to “tell them what to do, tell them how to do it, and check that they did it right.” General DePuy’s strategic environment, the Warsaw Pact threat model within an Industrial Age tradition, served to chart an
Army culture that would function more like a well-tuned machine rather than a thinking organization.

However, centralization within the operating force whether in physical terms (i.e., the collocation of units) or conceptual in terms (i.e., echeloned command and control and information requirements) is counterproductive for two principal reasons: One, it is extremely difficult to manage large and complex operations and organizations from above – top-down structures are slow to respond to local needs and they are not very adaptable. And top-down structures do not provide junior leaders with the autonomy to creatively solve problems.

Work on the nature of hierarchies spans nearly half a century and many hypotheses have been advanced to explain their existence. For example, within hierarchies people have two bosses: their “boss” and their “real boss.” The former is a person nominally responsible for their actions; the latter is the person from whom they could get a decision that mattered to their work. Others hypothesized that “time” was the principal characteristic where longer time horizons implied greater complexity; hence, the establishment of hierarchy. Apply this last hypothesis to military operations, for example, a Joint Force Commander naturally has a longer time horizon than, say, a Company Commander. Michael Raynor notes in his book, Strategic Paradox, that “. . . a well functioning hierarchy is differentiated by the degree of strategic uncertainty addressed at each level and integrated through a cascading series of strategic commitments as those uncertainties are resolved.” In other words, in hierarchies the responsibilities at each level do not necessarily imply more difficult decisions, but they definitely imply fundamentally different ones.

The discussion of the tensions raised above (i.e., abilities and limitations of technology, “can-do” attitude, and centralization and decentralization), provides a backdrop for other tensions in Army culture that are emerging from nearly eight years of combat. In particular, they are: the need to maintain its warrior ethos and combat prowess versus the need to operate in among the population and apply firepower with discipline and discretion; the need for stoicism versus the need to mitigate combat stress; and the need to educate a force in times of high stress and operations tempo (OPTEMPO).

The fourth tension affecting Army culture is the need to maintain a warrior ethos and combat prowess versus the need to operate in and among the population. This tension has received much attention in recent years. The warrior ethos is perhaps the most enduring element of the Army culture; in fact, the warrior lineage dates back to 700 BCE. Fundamentally, this long history permits contemporary soldiers to see themselves as part of a community that sustains itself through “sacred trust” and binds them to one another and to the society they serve. Essentially, without the warrior ethos the Army cannot be effective at what it does.

The Warrior Ethos was adopted into the U.S. Army Soldier’s Creed and first published in the magazine Infantry on 22 December 2003. However, Paul Robinson, Professor of Public and International Relations at the University of Ottawa, notes that the warrior ethos may not have been designed with irregular warfare or stability operations in mind:

“The talk of destroying the enemy, never accepting defeat, close combat and guarding the American way of life bear little relation to situations in which one is
meant to be protecting somebody else’s way of life, using minimum force, and if
necessary accepting losses in order to help others."

Fortunately, Army leaders and units adapted to the demands of
counterinsurgency operations; they recognized that the
indiscriminate use of force ran counter to accomplishing the
mission, and undermined Army culture. As a result, realistic
training environments and scenarios were developed at Combat
Training Centers (CTCs) including the use of non-combatants
where soldiers and leaders were tested on their reactions to
events similar to those found in counterinsurgencies, i.e.,
protecting non-combatants, as well as the discriminate and
disciplined use of firepower. Beyond the warrior ethos and what
is written into the creed, however, is a tension and a trend that
pits the ethos against the society.

In The Warrior Ethos, Christopher Coker, Professor of International Relations at the
London School of Economics, reinforces Robinson’s concern but concludes that the “western
warrior ethos is in trouble,” due principally to the erosion of the warrior myth, the judgment of
civil society in which sacrifice is not in fashion and courage is not celebrated, and new
technologies that threaten to strip warriors of their sense of comradeship. Bridging the gap
between the warrior ethos and society is not a new phenomenon. But the dangers are
consequential because if society is disconnected from the warrior, it becomes difficult to recruit
and retain soldiers, and governments are unappreciative of the fundamental requirements of
military effectiveness.

The fifth tension affecting Army culture is the need for stoicism versus the need to
mitigate combat stress. This friction is best summarized in Nancy Sherman’s book, Stoic
Warriors, where she notes that ancient stoic philosophy is important because it balances the need
for soldiers to preserve their capacity for anger and rage over inhumanity while retaining the
ability to grieve the loss of comrades. Indeed, military leaders also benefit through a stoic
perspective by understanding that emotions are subject to cognitive control, and that a leader’s
emotional demeanor matters because example is a powerful means to inspire courage as well as
respect and empathy among soldiers for fellow human beings. Essentially, Sherman views
respect and empathy as the principal safeguards against abuse and inhumane treatment in
combat.

The well-known ethical failures of the past, the 1968 My Lai massacre and the 2004 Abu
Ghraib prisoner-abuse scandal, could have been prevented, Sherman argues, if the soldiers who
committed those abuses were able to control their anger and conscious of their common
humanity with the prisoners. Similar to the previous discussions of tensions between warrior
ethos and civil society, ethical failures during times of war are not a new. To presume that ethical
failures will not occur in future conflicts is short-sighted. However, ethics in war (or, jus in
bello) is a monumental undertaking and outside the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, the
question becomes, how does the Army culture better prepare its leaders and soldiers today and
for the future so that these abuses remain, at the very least, remote anomalies?
At the onset to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, ethical training in preparation for combat was centered around international war conventions and the Uniform Code of Military Justice. There were various mediums employed to communicate these to leaders and soldiers – typically through PowerPoint briefings. This medium of ethical awareness, education, and/or training, however, typifies the top-down, event-driven training models reminiscent of the Cold War era with “task, conditions, and standards.” Why this is problematic should be clear: understanding and learning, especially about the ethical dilemmas in war, are best accomplished through experience. Fortunately, this is why CTCs transformed their training environments to reflect more realistic conditions like those found in counterinsurgencies, and why continued innovations in training (tailored to the levels of responsibility) and education (e.g., The Iraq Training Program, or ITP) are required.

The uncertainties and complexities of counterinsurgency generate combat stress to a greater degree than conventional operations, where battle lines are clearly drawn, the enemy is clearly identifiable, and aggression is channeled in a single direction. To mitigate combat stress, soldiers in contemporary military culture, are required to be (among other things) physically fit. They are also required to have discipline and develop a sense of loyalty and comradeship with their units and other soldiers. These characteristics seem clear in connection with the fortitude and resilience (stoicism) that combat requires. Preserving the professional military ethic – and the psychological wellbeing of soldiers – in the Army culture also requires leaders who help soldiers see how their risks and sacrifices are instrumental to the achievement of objectives.

Finally, the need to educate a force in times of high stress and operations tempo is the last tension discussed in this section. As recounted earlier, military education, training, and doctrine along with the assumptions of “defense transformation” did very little to prepare the military to fight the counterinsurgency wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. This realization came slowly; the growing call for change had to come from the bottom-up. Eventually enough pressure was put on the generating force to make the necessary changes. Those changes continue, a result of soldiers and officers with combat experience rotating through the generating force, but at a pace slower than the generating force can capture in curricula. The implication is, has the generating force learned how to institutionalize change – quickly enough – for the next war? Recent surveys conducted with several schools and centers (e.g. Army War College – Advanced Strategic Arts Seminar, Armed Forces Management College, the Sergeants Major Academy, Intermediate Level Education, and the Captain’s Career Course – Forts Benning, Lee, Leonard Wood) indicate that changes in curricula are still untimely.

Much has been written on how unprepared the operating force was to fight in a counterinsurgency environment; however, that writing and analysis are retrospective. While the 2006, Field Manual 3-24 updated an approach to counterinsurgency, there remains a handful of critics. Nevertheless, how the military prepares to fight future armed conflicts will largely be determined by how rapidly the military can incorporate its operational knowledge from the past. Conditions will demand better understanding, new techniques and procedures – perhaps significantly different counterinsurgency theories and methods will be needed. For instance, do we ‘know’ that the Iraq war (today) is best described as a counterinsurgency? The essential point remains that the Army cannot wait for transformation to occur during times of stress to be a catalyst for change. On the other hand, caution is needed: predicting the future through
“education” alone is only part of the answer. The future is undoubtedly complex, uncertain, and random; hence, training is great if it is the right training and experience is great if it is the right experience. Education provides the bridge between them and allows you to tell the difference.\textsuperscript{53}

The above discussion has a direct bearing on the Army’s culture as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have made educating and training difficult. Operations tempo (OPTEMPO), the ARFORGEN cycle, dwell times, and the strains of time demand often-deployed soldiers continue their education while concurrently making “down-time” with their families nearly untenable. Equally important is the apparent lack of currency in the techniques and procedures once these soldiers attend their required training. For example, current processes for approving training courses and school curricula are cumbersome, bureaucratic, and untimely; lessons learned by the operating force and institutionalized into the generating force are still approved too slowly; collection and analysis of lessons learned, after action reports, and theater visits by schools and training centers lack the necessary synthesis to provide relevant knowledge to educators and trainers. Furthermore, dissemination of that distilled knowledge is a cultural imperative.

In closing, then, much of change in the Army over the past eight years developed from the bottom-up.\textsuperscript{54} Undoubtedly, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have been the catalysts of that change, which, in turn, have a direct effect on Army culture. If the Army needs to adjust its balance between the generating and operating force, finding that balance requires an identification of potential problems and a critical assessment of their underlying assumptions. Balancing both the generating and operating forces across the spectrum of conflict and achieving balance for “complex, dynamic and unanticipated challenges of the future”\textsuperscript{55} is undeniably the Army’s most pressing issue. During the 1980s, balance was achieved through a shared concept of Army operations (i.e., AirLand Battle). By the 1990s, the Army lost this balance in a period of strategic ambiguity; the Army vision of future war became corrupted as the institutional force embraced much of the faith-based orthodoxy of technology and “defense transformation.”\textsuperscript{56} As the Army comes to terms with where it has been and where it is, we must take advantage of this opportunity to begin to shape our culture for where we need to go. In the process of doing so, however, we must remember that although culture might be nurtured and developed, it cannot be engineered.

**Maintaining the Emergent Behaviors of an Army at War**

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have created leaders and soldiers who are comfortable operating outside their unit’s mission and organization demonstrating the *tactical adaptability* that is now a common cultural trait in the operating force. Repetitive combat missions in ambiguous environments have created this culture of adaptability. Soldiers and leaders recognize that they must remain agile and adaptive in order to accomplish their missions—missions which individuals and units are not institutionally educated for, trained for, or properly equipped to execute.\textsuperscript{57} Units consistently demonstrate flexibility within their organizations as they perform missions not traditionally associated with their expertise or task lists.\textsuperscript{58}

Importantly, the years of war created a remarkable convergence of two “distinct but interconnected dynamics, each of which was driven by a particular group within the US military:
a cadre of junior leaders who worked hard to solve immediate problems that the military
establishment had failed to foresee or adequately address in a timely manner, and a cadre of
senior institutional dissidents whose critique of the US military was drawn from their own
observations and the substance of the junior cadre’s complaints.” Significantly, the rate of
change of this learning was initially “rapid at the tactical level, much slower on the operational
level, and almost non-existent on the strategic level.” As one participant in the US Army War
College Advanced Strategic Arts Seminar Sensing Session commented, “there is a disconnect
between most senior leaders and a major today who has spent his whole career in war.”
Importantly, a similar disconnect—as described earlier within this paper—exists between the
generating force and the operating force.

“Gone are the assumptions for units that 100 percent equipment fill is deployment ready,
because in many cases units require theater provided equipment that is not part of their force
design tables of equipment. Gone are the models of readiness that are primarily based on training
gates. In an environment where everything is accelerated faster than the model’s design, it is a
real challenge for units to synchronize manning, organization, equipping and training their units
for their assigned mission set.” Soldiers and leaders have mastered a broad range of tasks
necessary to accomplish a wide array of missions in the complex environment that characterizes
the current fight, this mastery comes from necessity and occurs in combat. The current
operational environment is “producing a cohort of innovative, confident, and adaptable leaders
and soldiers. Work is in progress to sustain this newly developed adaptability in our junior
leaders, a quality necessary for future leaders.”

This agility needs to be reflected equally in the generating force, which has traditionally
been impeded by bureaucracy resulting in training courses and curricula that is slow to adapt.
The emphasis on adaptability in the combined arms fight that is common in the wars in Iraq and
Afghanistan has yet to be fully institutionalized. Importantly, “innovations in education and
training must be enveloped by a shift in the U.S. military’s cultural disposition towards” future
warfare and full spectrum operations. Particularly in the junior leaders PME, despite a common
core these courses tend to be rigid and branch centric, lacking the adaptability shown in the
operational force. The Army’s educational curricula is still attempting to adapt its POI from
fundamentally flawed concepts that drove an over emphasis on network-centric warfare. The
perceived lack of relevance to the current operations leaves the operating force with the feeling it
must rely on Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs) learned in combat as opposed to the
doctrine learned from the generating force, resulting in a doctrine of TTPs.

TTPs that emerge from combat develop and change in response to the current
environment, to include enemy TTPs. This pace is critical to mission accomplishment and
survival in the fight, but cannot be matched by the generating force, in regards to integrating
into, changing, or writing new doctrine. This leads to a further widening of the cultural gap
between the operating force and the generating force. A learning organization acknowledges
“that tactical leaders in the field can spur innovation that, when accepted by higher commanders,
 diametrically reshapes an army in combat.” We as an army are showing signs of this learning in
and reshaping in theater, but there is still a significant lag within the generating force. The
operating force still perceives the institution as a bureaucracy that is slow to react and change,
placing more trust in the TTPs handed off by the unit they are replacing. This cultural aspect
perpetuates itself as leaders and Soldiers continue to engage in a protracted war, and will until
the institution can relate doctrine to the current situation and incorporate lessons learned and
TTPs in a timely manner. However, tactical adaptability is linked to positive changes in the
training culture.

There has been a dramatic change in what constitutes effective training during the last
eight years of combat resulting in an outcome-oriented training and an understanding-oriented
education culture. Prior to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, force on force scenarios at the
Combat Training Centers (CTC) emphasized the concentration of combat power and the use of
overwhelming firepower, overly oriented on effects and targeting. The Army further remained
wedded to certain gate-training strategies designed before the war that quickly became dated as
enemy TTPs evolved and the Army grew a core group of combat tested veterans who recognized
the need for a different training paradigm. As Army leaders and units adapted to the demands
of counterinsurgency operations, they recognized that the indiscriminant use of fires ran counter
to accomplishing the mission and strengthened the enemy. Recognizing this tension, CTCs now
evaluate units not only on their ability to overwhelm the enemy but also on their disciplined and
discriminating use of firepower and ability to protect non-combatants. Training at home station
and CTCs has now incorporated role players and cultural experts to accurately depict the
operational environment with scenarios that allow units to emphasize the importance of
appropriate actions as they apply the Warrior Ethos in a realistic scenario. Our training culture is
changing as a result of the ongoing wars, the experiences of our leaders at various levels, and the
lessons learned brought back from combat to the training centers. There is concern however that
“outcome oriented training and education is very tactical and loses its utility as one progresses in
a career.”

Moreover, these training developments need to occur at the same time that the Army
refines its professional military education. The educational system should capitalize on the
adaptability emerging from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Further, PME should seek to
provide the very cultural characteristics the Army will need against hybrid threats “while
remaining sensitive to the nuances of operating among the people in an era of persistent
conflict.” David Ucko also speaks to this point, stating “Along with the initiative and
decision-making capabilities required for all military operations,” these characteristics should
include “civil-military skills geared toward interaction with nonmilitary personnel, as well as
politically-military awareness, a broad intellectual background, and an appreciation for history and
culture.”

The complex nature of the environment and the enemy’s brutality drive a need for an
effective strategy that emphasizes the need for moral and ethical education and training. The
shift in thinking about armed conflict and the judicious application of firepower only serves to
further emphasize this need for change in our training and PME because in today’s operational
areas “moral-ethical failures, even at the lowest levels, have strategic implications.” In the past,
training in this area consisted of a JAG officer presenting a PowerPoint presentation on the Law
of War, which is inadequate for our current and future operational environment. As Christopher
Coker observed in The Warrior Ethos, however, individual and institutional values are more
important than legal constraints on immoral behavior; legal contracts are often observed only as
long as others honor them or as long as they are enforced. Focusing training on the legal
aspects of war does little to reinforce a common culture. The Counterinsurgency Manual focuses
on values, reinforcing the culture: “the Nation’s and the profession’s values are not negotiable and that “violations of them are not just mistakes; they are failures in meeting fundamental standards of the profession of arms.” Command emphasis on ethics and values within the operational forces has much greater effect than the mandatory training gates of pre-deployment. When these professional values are demonstrated throughout the command it becomes ingrained in the culture of the organization. However, this becomes difficult when unit leaders are not in place long enough to establish and reinforce these cultural norms.

The ethics training and leader development mentioned above is just one small piece of the loss in depth of collective training due to unit manning issues during reset and train up for the next combat tour. The requirement for units to deploy with only one year of training preparation between combat tours has compressed the training cycle and placed considerable pressure on units and leaders. Units must rely heavily on CTC Mission Readiness Exercises (MRX) to build combat readiness, primarily because the ARFORGEN cycle is unable to replace leaders in time to conduct collective training with the team that will actually deploy and fight. As a result, there is an emphasis on individual training to prepare for combat, which can provide individuals with special skill sets that can be an asset to the unit, but does not bridge the gap in collective training. The flaws in the ARFORGEN system also manifest themselves in unit cohesion and discipline issues. Leaders must be present to ingrain the standards and ethical compass in their subordinates and instill the discipline and confidence necessary for success in combat. This failure of the ARFORGEN and life-cycle manning process is a source of great frustration among leaders. Officers interviewed stated that that ARFORGEN (as it is being executed) “breaks units” and creates a frustrating—and perhaps tragic—cycle where “units share suffering together, increase their bonds and cohesion, and then we break them up.” Many officers and NCOs felt that the breakup of units, and in particular, the turbulence in NCOs and officers, was the principle cause of increases in misconduct, the erosion of discipline, and the increase in suicides. However it has been expressed that “issues with ARFORGEN are overstated. There are issues, but… the outcome with our flawed system on the ground is pretty amazing.”

Unit cohesion—and the leadership, discipline, training, and education that produces it—is particularly important in our current and future operating environments. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have highlighted the need for decentralized operations, and therefore decentralized mission command, in which junior leaders bear tremendous responsibility for ensuring mission accomplishment. “Mission command is the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based on mission orders for effective mission accomplishment. Successful mission command results from subordinate leaders at all echelons exercising disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent to accomplish missions. It requires an environment of trust and mutual understanding.” Mission command requires operational commanders to continually assess the situation, make necessary adjustments and ensure that all members of their team take initiative to overcome obstacles in pursuit of mission accomplishment. The junior officers and mid grade non-commissioned officers who operate in the mission command environment enforce standards of moral conduct and make critical decisions in a stressful, ambiguous environment.

The culture that is evolving in combat, using decentralized mission command, places a great deal of trust in junior leaders. These junior leaders, who embrace this responsibility and trust in combat, perceive a lack of trust when returned to an institutional environment. It is felt that the generating force contains outdated ideas held over from an interwar Army, where a “zero
"defect mentality" leads to an environment of micro-management. Coming from an environment of decentralized operations where junior leaders are given more latitude this can cause a culture shock. Thus, further emphasizing the perceived lack of trust and reinforcing an emerging generational gap.

This generational gap is a demonstration of cultural strain that is being exacerbated as junior leaders move between combat and garrison. During sensing sessions at CGSC and the Sergeants Major Academy, there was concern that non-commissioned officers achieving the rank of SFC in seven years time doesn’t provide the leader or expert needed at that grade. Junior leaders, on the other hand, argue that these individuals usually have three or more years of combat experience out of those seven years, which provides expertise and leader skills. Both arguments have merit and show a divide in generational cultures between junior leaders and senior officers, some of whom junior leaders refer to as being from “the black boot Army”. This cultural gap can place a strain on the trust that is critical during combat.

In addition to the generational gap, there is a growing rift between officers and NCOs within the operating forces and those perceived to be ‘hiding out’ in positions that are not typically deployed. Again, several participants in our sensing sessions asked the question bluntly: “Is the institutional Army at war?” In simple terms, there is a feeling that the hardships of combat are not shared equitably.

Culture is important to forming the social and individual identity that is critical to the environment of trust called for in the concept of mission command. The critical element of that environment is trust, again the trust we put in junior leaders in combat, but don’t seem to maintain in the institutional environment. Warfare will continue to—as it always has—require decentralization and mission command to fight and win. In the future operating environment, this will require inculcating this trust of junior leaders into the Army’s culture.

Experience gained in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has honed elements of the Army’s combined arms expertise. The wealth of combined arms and joint combat experience has resulted in an emphasis on combined arms, reducing the cultural divide among branches. AC/RC units have demonstrated their essential capabilities and contributed to the Army’s role in the ‘long war’. Wartime TTPs have migrated rapidly across the operational forces despite branch or specialty. The shared combat experiences and hardships have proven the conflict between the Army’s sub-cultures is generally superficial. Through these shared experiences and the increased emphasis on combined arms operations the operational forces have broken through barriers that divided the Army’s sub-cultures in the past. Organizational changes under the modular Army concept have led to the creation of functions, i.e. maneuver, maneuver support, fires, and sustainment, reducing the emphasis on branch. This helps to reinforce the combined arms aspects of our culture, however there are also negative aspects to modularity. The commander must build a strong unit identity and esprit de corps at home station to counter the ‘plug and play’ aspects of modularity on moral and discipline. The emphasis on functions has been identified by the generating force, leading to the creation of Centers of Excellence. Despite the focus on functions the institution still relies on basic branches for combat development. The institution needs to adapt at a faster pace, this adaptation will be instrumental in reinforcing the combined arms emphasis in our Army culture.
The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have caused the Army to balance an overemphasis on technology, left over from the ideas of RMA and “Transformation Orthodoxy”, by focusing on the human dimension of the current wars. The Army has learned that “the network-centric/systems analytical approach to war is inadequate for meeting twenty-first century security challenges” because “war is about politics, and politics is about people.” Until recently the Army’s human dimension focus has been outward looking, focused on instilling cultural awareness and sensitivity towards the indigenous populations among whom we are operating and with whom we are interacting with. There isn’t a balanced effort to instill an appreciation of the human dimension as it relates to the Army’s culture. Steps have been taken in recognition of the importance of the human dimension and culture, with the fielding of Human Terrain Teams and the formation of the University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies. The operating force understands the human dimension as it relates to Soldiers and leaders executing their mission in combat. When examining the human dimension and the complete Soldier one must also consider the influences outside of the Army, particularly the impact of the family.

Soldiers are the strength of our nation and much of that strength comes from their families. The Army has come to the realization that they must focus on the family. The sacrifices of the families in the Army are unique from other occupations; war exacerbates these sacrifices and challenges. These sacrifices range from the possibility of death or life changing injuries and extended separation related to combat tours to the frequent relocation and long work hours during ‘stabilization’. The Army Family Covenant shows the Army’s strides to balance mission requirements and needs of the families and mitigating the strain on the force. The Army Family Covenant reflects the value our culture places on the family, acknowledging the strong, supportive environment provided by a partnership between the Army and our families resulting in strength and resilience of our Soldiers during protracted war. There is still a perception, particularly among our junior officers, that the Army still doesn’t adequately consider the effects on families when developing policies that have great impact on them, such as PCS moves to schools which cause multiple moves in a relatively short period of time.

The past ten years has seen a change in the diversity of the Army. There have been significant changes in demographics, which can drive changes in behavior and therefore changes in culture. Of note is the change in the role of women in the Army, specifically related to combat. During sensing sessions there was a shared belief among the men and women that at the unit level there was a greater acceptance of women based on their proven abilities. This represents a significant shift in cultural thinking. Policy still restricts women from serving in units whose primary mission is direct ground combat. However, women are serving in combat and the Army culture needs to acknowledge this fact, they are truck drivers, gunners, medics, helicopter pilots and military police attached to combat units putting them in the same or similar environments as the ‘gunfighters’. Additionally women are performing culturally sensitive duties that men can’t do, such as searching indigenous women. The current wars, and those in the foreseeable future, are non linear battlefields that blur the distinction between combat and non-combat specialties. This shift in culture is also reflected in the civilian population, a 2007 USA Today Gallop Poll says that 74 percent of Americans say that women should be able to hold combat jobs, up from 36 percent that were asked that same question in 1981.
Annex A: Towards Achieving Desired Outcomes

As mentioned earlier, cultural tension itself is neither bad nor good; it can, however, be creative or destructive. This is an important point, because it emphasizes the fact that the current state of Army culture—like the Army itself—is strained, but not broken. As many senior leaders know, largely because they lived through the difficult days that followed Vietnam, things have been worse. As a result, the Army needs to know that these cultural tensions are not the harbingers of doom. But, as the All-Volunteer Army approaches its thirty-seventh year, the current state of the Army’s culture does bring with it the opportunity for further change.

The Army should seek to evolve its professional culture. In doing so, leaders must take a series of specific actions to reinforce emerging positive behaviors while reducing the tensions against the backdrop of protracted conflicts. In short, increasing the percentage of military officers and NCOs in the generating force will reinforce positive cultural change that Secretary Gates alluded to.

The Army can restructure its generating force through a number of measures. First, the Army must develop and maintain a grounded, realistic idealized version of future conflict. Second, the Army must ensure that its personnel assignment system brings the right balance of DA civilians, contractor support, and military officers and NCOs into its generating force. More specifically, Army leaders should prioritize efforts to increase the percentage of military officers and NCOs in the parts of the Army where the institution conducts its thinking and its procuring—its schools, academies, and concept and doctrinal development centers. The bottom line is that the Army must consider the effect on the Army and the intrinsic—and sometimes intangible—value that comes with having a experienced member of the operating force participating in key generating force functions. For example, at professional military education (PME) institutions such as Captain’s Career Courses (CCCs)—and perhaps more importantly at the Command and General Staff College (ILE-CGSC)—officers emerging from the operating force expect to and need to interact with other officers that are both fluent in the nature of current operations as well as fully prepared to educate peers, seniors and subordinates. Wholesale changes to aspects of the Army’s personnel management system, to include an objective reconsideration of the balance between “generalization” and “specialization” will be required to affect this transition. Finally, senior leaders can facilitate this important cultural change by considering the following actions:

- continue Army-wide discussion about culture and incorporate initial findings into the Army Capstone Concept;
- communicate clearly to the force the behaviors and practices that we want to reinforce and those that we want to change;
- balance an inculcation of the warrior ethos with moral, ethical, and psychological preparation for operations against hybrid threats in and amongst the population;
- encourage risk-taking and decentralization consistent with mission command. Ensure that risk management does not create risk aversion;
- determine how to preserve unit cohesion and the chain of command during ARFORGEN transitions;
o narrow the gap between the operating and generating forces with priority to organizations where the Army does its thinking, procuring, and leader development;
o increase the intellectual rigor of leader development and education; and
o effect changes to the Army personnel system that provide more opportunities for and reward education (e.g., Leader Development Strategy)

By examining how we talk about our culture and about war, as well as examining how we think, train, and learn about war, and how we assign personnel throughout the Army, we might very well discover how to achieve the cultural and operational balance that a full-spectrum force requires.

The cultural tensions within today’s Army in 2009 did not develop in a vacuum – their roots are in the recent history of the modern All-Volunteer Army. Examining the organizational culture shaped during the first two eras has relevancy for two reasons. First, behaviors, practices, and beliefs developed between 1973-2001 shaped the Army’s response to the GWOT and continue to shape U.S. Army behaviors, practices, and beliefs today, often in ways we might not fully realize. Second, understanding how and why these behaviors, practices, and beliefs formed informs our own investigation of how to shape today’s organizational culture. When one thinks about the organizational culture of the modern All-Volunteer Army, it should be periodized into three eras: 1973-1991, 1991-2001, 2001-present. Each era presents continuities for us to consider as we examine the Army’s culture today.

At the end of the Vietnam War, in a metaphorical sense, the U.S. Army was returning home after having fought a costly war that had divided American society and politics and had been concluded to an unsatisfactory end with the fall of Saigon in 1975. In the midst of its withdrawal from Vietnam, the U.S. Army also had the daunting task of transitioning from the draft to an All-Volunteer Army in an era when large segments of the country’s youth was at best ambivalent, or at worst openly hostile to military service. It should not be underestimated that in the same era, the Army was accommodating the expanding role and status of women in the armed forces. The Army was also at the threshold of a wave of new technologies that would affect the scope and nature of work and combat routines down to the individual soldier level. Finally, the U.S. Army believed it was entering into a long era of scarce resources where every program and dollar would come under intense scrutiny from the Congressional and Executive branches.

The U.S. Army also faced significant external challenges. The revelations of the Yom Kippur War about modern warfare and a surging Soviet threat (in terms of weapons technology that was matching American technology, new Soviet operational doctrine, increased Soviet deployments in Europe and abroad) posed grave problems for the Army’s doctrine and structure. Yet these problems also helped to focus the senior leaders of the U.S. Army on the direction of future change. These parallel external factors gave meaning and purpose to the Army officer corps, who embraced the challenge of understanding the nature of modern warfare with intellectual excitement and rigor as they sought to master first the tactical, and then the operational art. The Soviet threat, although not clearly perceived or accepted by the American public, gave purpose and urgency to the actions of the officer corps. When one reads the memoranda and papers of the officer corps in this era, one senses an urgency to solve problems quickly. This urgency was a product of a cultural sea change in the Army – the concept of “force readiness.” The Army’s evaluation of the Soviet strategic threat, the operational characteristics of modern war, and the belief that American domestic public support was transitory meant that the Army had to “win the first battle” – which required soldiers, equipment, and units to be ready to fight “as you are” at all times.
One of the Army’s first responses to this strategic dilemma and era of scarce resources was the “Total Army” plan proposed by CSA, General Creighton Abrams. General Abrams proposed a force structure of 16 active-duty divisions, which would rely on Reserve and National Guard units to “round-out” their combat, CS, and CSS elements in time of war. Part of this plan was a commitment to a manpower level of 785,000 active-duty soldiers, which helped provide a measure of resource predictability. Part of the reason Congress was amenable to this design was due to the Army’s demonstrated seriousness to reduce, streamline, and reorganize the Army’s institutional bureaucracy with the STEADFAST reorganizations.1

During this era, the institutional army led the Army in the development and implementation of a host of reforms to doctrine, organization, training, material, and personnel management. The creation of a single command, TRADOC, to manage and integrate training, doctrine, and material developments was significant. However, U.S. Army reforms did not flow from a grand campaign plan/vision at TRADOC or even at the green or civilian sides of the Department of the Army. Rather, the reforms were the result of a multitude of efforts throughout the Army. Some initial reforms proved to be counter-productive, and were later changed or eliminated. Yet, by the end of the 1980s, the U.S. Army looked much different from the Army of the early 1970s. It had a disciplined, well-trained, well-led, and well-equipped force that was extremely proficient in combined arms mechanized warfare. What gave these reforms unity, even in their flaws, was a clearly articulated aim point which was understood, and accepted, down to the lowest level.

The Army’s organizational culture changed due to several reforms. First, the Army underwent a “doctrinal renaissance” and a “revolution in training.”2 This doctrinal renaissance was initiated by the leadership of the first TRADOC commander, General William DePuy and then advanced by an energetic debate within the both the operational and institutional sides of the officer corps. Eventually, Army doctrine writers at the Combined Arms Center developed AirLand Battle through close consultation with other TRADOC entities, the operational army (especially USAREUR), the Air Force, America’s closest coalition partners, and even Congressional critics. This doctrine was simulated and tested by wargames conducted by Army agencies populated by officers with operational experience. The “training revolution” too resulted from critical study of the emerging social and behavioral science literature of the 1960s.

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1 STEADFAST was a large-scale reorganization plan of the Army’s bureaucracy. In 1969, the CSA, General Westmoreland, directed the Army staff to consider plans of how to reorganize an Army bureaucracy that was perceived as bloated, inefficient, and unresponsive to the needs of the operational force. The A/VICE (a position eliminated in 1973), then LTG DePuy, spent the next three years analyzing the functions of all the agencies of the institutional Army and then designed a major reorganization plan. A significant number of offices and agencies were consolidated, the Department of the Army staff was reduced, and a score of general officer positions were downgraded or eliminated. One of the key components of the plan was the dissolution of Continental Army Command (CONARC) into Forces Command (FORSCOM) and Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). The creation of a single command (TRADOC) to manage training and doctrine, and ultimately influence equipment development, gave coherency to the myriad of programs, systems, and commands that existed prior to STEADFAST.

and 1970s. It was linked to a careful analysis of the tasks and functions the Army anticipated its soldiers, NCOs, and small units had to accomplish on the modern battlefield. From these analyses was borne the Skills Qualification Tests, “How to Fight” manuals, and the ARTEP program. The MILES system, weapon simulators, command post tactical simulations, and National Training Center were revolutionary developments that added unprecedented realism to battle-focused training, with commensurate improvements in training outcomes. While TRADOC led these developments, these changes gained traction within the broader organizational culture of the Army because of the collaborative relationships TRADOC fostered with both the operational force and close allies to draw from their knowledge and receive feedback.

Just as critical to changing the Army’s organizational culture were changes in the Army’s personnel culture. Undoubtedly, the personnel situation of the post-Vietnam Army was a nadir in the history of the U.S. Army. The 1970 Army War College Study on Military Professionalism revealed deep dissatisfaction with the Army’s ethical climate among the officer’s mid-grade leaders. The discord was even worse at the junior officer level. Additionally, the Vietnam War had decimated the ranks of the NCO Corps, through casualties, attrition from NCOs retiring after repeated tours, or loss to OCS commissioning. Instead of experience, many NCOs were products of the “shake and bake” system that produced NCOs from each draft call-up class. Indeed, in many ways the early 1970s NCO corps was openly resistant to change or urgent action. Finally, a disproportionate number of young soldiers were poorly educated, drug-users, or had criminal convictions. In many ways, the Army’s woes were a reflection of the sociological problems in American society during the 1970s.

The Army’s initial responses to these problems proved unsatisfactory. Centralized selection boards helped somewhat, but the new OER quickly became hopelessly inflated. The “dual track” system for officers would require revisions to make it more feasible. Moreover, by the mid-1970s the discussion on ethics within the officer corps was largely censured by senior officers who considered it insolent and too critical. Meanwhile, the ‘rap sessions’ and ‘soldiers councils’ adopted from the VOLAR program did not solve the fundamental problems of indiscipline and the weakness of the small-unit chain-of-command. The Army’s recruiting woes limited the Army’s ability to discharge soldiers that were performing below standard.

In the late 1970s, senior Army leaders (in TRADOC, DCSPER, DCSOPS, and the MACOMs) came to recognize that the Army had to address the human dimension problem. What drove them to this conclusion was a realization that advances in technology and doctrine were not enough to allow the U.S. Army’s scarce resources to close the gap with Soviet combat capabilities. The Army needed to do more with less, and the Army’s senior leaders perceived that the greatest leaps in combat capabilities were to be gained by improving leader development and organizational efficiency. Another driving factor was the ethical issues that the Army had

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3 Both Army (U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences) and independent (Human Resources Research Organization) research institutions assisted TRADOC.
5 For example of stifled discussion of ethics, see John Cushman, *Fort Leavenworth—A Memoir* (Annapolis, MD: J. Cushman, 2001), 56-64.
6 General Starry (TRADOC cdr); General Rogers (CSA); General Meyer (CSA)
7 Starry memo.
not forthrightly addressed in the early 1970s continued to be sources of dissatisfaction within the officer corps.\textsuperscript{8}

Together, the generating force’s components of TRADOC and DCSPER took actions to improve the human dimension of the Army’s organizational culture. In the late 1970s, TRADOC, with DCSPER assistance, implemented major revisions of the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES).\textsuperscript{9} The Army took similar actions to revamp the officer development, although it shifted the overall balance in favor of training at the expense of education.\textsuperscript{10} The “Be All You Can Be” recruiting campaign launched in 1980 captured the Army’s desire for individual excellence and proved to be a stunning success at raising the image of Army service and attracting higher quality recruits. Finally, other outside developments contributed to an improvement in the human dimension. The adoption of stringent disciplinary actions for drug use demonstrated to ‘good’ soldiers that the Army was serious about cleaning up its ranks. In the early 1980s, the fielding of a host of cutting-edge technological advances (new tanks, armored fighting vehicles, wheeled vehicles, communication equipment, and night vision devices) made the Army an exciting place to serve for the individual.

The Army also took concrete actions to improve the organizational culture of its operational units. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Army institutionalized processes aimed at improving and sustaining the organizational efficiency of its units – NTC and the use of the AAR are but a few examples.\textsuperscript{11} This “systems” orientation also influenced the Army to adopt ways of improving cohesion. By the early 1980s, the Army was implementing the Unit Manning System across the operating force. The Unit Manning System sought to build cohesion and reduce personnel turbulence by using a battalion rotation model for some overseas deployments, the COHORT system (stabilizing first-term soldiers and an NCO and officer cadre for three years), and a regimental system for assigning officers and NCOs.\textsuperscript{12} In the early 1980s, the Army would experiment with the Battalion Rotation Model for overseas deployments.

\textsuperscript{8} For surveys of continuing discontent with the Army’s ethical climate in the late 1970s, see D.M. (Mike) Malone Papers, Box 29 – Professionalism, Military History Institute, Carlisle, PA.

\textsuperscript{9} The development of an NCO education system was multi-faceted. The Programs of Instruction for the Noncommissioned Officer Academy courses were revamped and standardized to focus on tactical tasks, small-unit leadership skills, and “how to train” instruction. The physical fitness test and training was standardized, with an accompanying manual. New manuals on leadership and counseling, and the 5 ”x”7” NCO guide, spoke in a down-to-earth language about the roles and responsibilities of the Army small unit leader, and were well-received by the operational force.

\textsuperscript{10} The Review of Education and Training for Officers (RETO), informally known as the Harrison Board made many recommendations. It raised evaluation standards for the Army ROTC program and revamped the Officer Basic Course to give it a more tactical training focus, eliminating its more “education” oriented components. It also led to the creation of CAS3 as a school to train staff officers. Finally, as a result of RETO, TRADOC attempted to develop Military Qualification Standards (MQS) for officers. These MQS standards never had the same impact as the SQT standards for soldiers.

\textsuperscript{11} In the late 1970s while drawing from a wide range of business and systems engineering literature, TRADOC began a slew of analyses that examined the Army as a “system of systems.” These analyses focused on how to improve processes and communication within organizations from the crew-level, to battalion, to Corps, to Department of the Army activities. These analyses informed a host of innovations, from more logical weapon system development processes, to the Army 86 reorganization, to AirLand Battle Doctrine, to the development of NTC and its After-Action Review process.

\textsuperscript{12} The regimental system designed by TRADOC with the enthusiastic support of the Chief of Staff of the Army (General Meyer) is the primary reason why regimental affiliations are scattered about the Army, i.e. 1-22 is in xxx
Finally, in the late 1970s, Army senior leaders initiated a discourse on Army values that had hardly existed before. Of course, the Army officer and NCO corps had spent almost a decade working through issues of ‘race relations’ and the integration of women into the Army. Often, these measures had been imposed upon and ambivalent to recalcitrant Army officer corps by the civilian leadership of the Department of Army or Congress. Many officers considered the emphasis on equal opportunity and race relations as huge distracters and actually counter-productive to better internal unit climates. Also, gender integration was considerably controversial in terms of its perceived threat to the Army’s culture. And, though the Army leadership frequently spoke of values, many Army officers believed that the officer corps was not living up to those values. The obvious ‘hollowness’ of the Army seemed to belie public statements of “readiness.” Additionally, Army officers perceived that the contemporary social climate (with its moral relativism, its ‘me’ centered narcissism, and its distrust of authority) of the 1970s and the heterogeneous background of incoming soldiers made the values of its incoming accessions ill-conducive to Army service. Faced with this turbulent ethical climate, the CSA and TRADOC sought for the first time in the Army’s history to explicitly define what constituted Army values.

The 1981 version of FM 100-1 (The Army) formally defined the Army’s professional ethic for the first time as: loyalty to the ideals of the nation, loyalty to the unit, personal responsibility, and selfless service. This professional ethic was augmented by four defined soldierly values, known as the four C’s: candor, commitment, competence and courage. Moreover, Army doctrine in the 1982 version of FM 100-5 emphasized leader initiative and the principle of Auftragstaktik. This ethos well-embodied the direction desired by both the Army as an organization and its constituent soldiers and leaders. Truthfulness in readiness reports was emphasized; commanders ceased to be punished for less than perfect readiness. The clear standards of SQTs and ARTEPs encouraged truthful reporting. A values discourse accelerated during the mid-1980s in a variety of ways. As CSA, GEN Wickham directed a sea change in attitudes towards alcohol use, club activities, and smoking. The Army became increasingly family-focused as senior Army leaders emphasized in words and deeds that a partnership existed between the Army and Army families. By the time of Desert Storm, the Army’s diversity and advances in meritocracy (regardless of race or gender) would be perceived by the American public and touted by the Army’s leadership as one of the Army’s greatest strengths.

The summation of all these reforms was the production of an organizational culture that was focused, at times ruthlessly, on organizational improvement and judged its members on their...
competence. Organizations placed training and maintenance towards ‘force readiness’ as their central priority. Soldiers and leaders believed that their doctrine, training, and education had prepared them for their wartime mission – a mission that had the support of a wide consensus among American politicians, media, and public. To be sure, many of these reforms only gained traction in the 1980s, when resources became more available and a shift in cultural attitudes made military service attractive to a pool of better qualified individuals. However, some facets of this organizational culture would later become obstacles to change after Desert Storm.

Desert Storm itself was a singular event for the U.S. Army. It was the culmination of two decades of hard, preparatory work; it was the validation of Army Cold War doctrine and training systems; it was a stunning display of American Army competence that gained notice throughout the world. It seemed to erase all the flaws and negative images the Army had borne since the Vietnam War.

Yet, the overwhelming U.S. victory against a foe that was technologically and organizationally inferior an exceptionally sterile battlefield masked some of the limitations inherent to the Army’s reforms. During the 1980s, professional self-development and excellence had become increasingly defined solely by tactical competence. The Army itself thought primarily about the tactical and operational art for one battlefield environment – Central Europe - giving little consideration to the broader strategic-level transformations occurring to the nature of combat. When the Army did consider the challenges of “low intensity conflict”, its solutions were structural: creating light infantry divisions and making Special Forces its own branch. Mainstream Army tactical and operational thought was already becoming increasingly centered on “target servicing” of the various echelons of an enemy array—a misinterpretation of the lessons of Desert Storm. Army strategic thought inadequately considered how the Army might have to respond to the growing instability in the ‘Third World,’ the rise of violent extremist Islamic groups, and the general growth of militant sub-state groups (drug cartels, ethnic/sectarian groups) who used a mix of unconventional and conventional means on an increasingly urban and demographically diverse battlefield. Experiences in Lebanon, El Salvador, Columbia, and Afghanistan were neglected leading indicators of this future world. Already, unhealthy splits in the organizational culture were occurring, dividing the force between the “heavy” and “light” community. These divides were in many ways exacerbated by the assigned roles and responsibilities of the two types, the nature of the Combat Training Center scenarios, and the doctrine and force structure designed in this era. Additionally, the Army was never able to raise Reserve and National Guard readiness to their stated goals. Finally, the American public for the first time experienced a major war without its government asking them to volunteer or make any sacrifice. The media and American public indulged itself on images of smart bombs and a patriotic narrative provided by the military that deemphasized the gritty reality of combat and killing. The success of Desert Storm seemed to confirm the merits of this sundered connection between the Army and society.

Even before Desert Storm, the Army’s organizational culture was coming under substantial external pressures as Congress began the steep drawdown of U.S. forces after the collapse of Soviet communism. In this environment, Army resources faced a double challenge. Air power advocates viewed their contribution to Desert Storm as the decisive factor, and argued that the need for substantial land forces was unnecessary. This argument held great weight

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with those who sought resource savings and minimal casualties. On the other hand, large
segments of the Army officer corps and senior leadership resisted the idea that a dynamic global
environment had changed American national policies and required the Army to rework its
strategic employment concepts, mission sets, doctrine, training, organizational structure, and
material acquisition. Conceptually the generating force remained focused on fighting a Major
Regional Conflict against a conventional force, even as the operational Army confronted stability
operations in complex human geographic environments. Only a few officers recommended
revisiting the doctrine for fighting a counter-insurgency. Even within the operational force, there
was an entire segment of junior, mid-level, and senior officers that actively avoided and
disparaged the experience of stability operations. The Army did little more than revise its Cold
War ‘aim point’ to reflect the technological predictions of ‘RMA.’

Facets of the Army’s organizational culture, including implicit beliefs about what the
Army “could” and “should” do, created obstacles to a realistic, critical assessment of the Army’s
future landpower role and structure. The Army’s “transformation” initiatives of Force XXI and
Army Warfighting Experiments helped the Army evaluate the impact of substantial changes
occurring in the information age. However, early “transformation” initiatives reinforced facets
of the Army’s organizational culture that would become problematic. Many “transformation”
initiatives adopted the questionable presumptions of airpower advocates: future war would be
against a largely conventional force or vulnerable network nodes and that decisive action could
be attained through ever smaller Army forces delivering stand-off precision fires—all made
possible by perfect situational awareness. This theoretical vision was in some ways antithetical
to the traditional understanding of the Army’s landpower role, yet it was adopted as much as a
survival strategy in an era of constrained resources as for its analytical saliency. Yet if these
visions were meant to bring clarity, instead the taxonomy of buzzwords and concepts that
sprung up around these “transformation” theories became increasingly opaque and
incomprehensible to the average officer and soldier.

Training also suffered from the rigidity of thought. DESERT STORM had validated
our doctrine and only seemed to require refinement of our procedures, so CTC experiences at the
battalion and brigade levels became increasingly focused on staff processes and products like
targeting and the ‘synch matrix.’ Furthermore, the typical four-week NTC experience and the
brief lengths of OPERATION JUST CAUSE and OPERATION DESERT STORM encouraged
officers to conceptualize war as one short, violent, decisive battle against a foe with a rigid task
organization and doctrinal gameplan.

Material and force structure development also had an impact on the Army’s
organizational culture. The most prominent material acquisition programs focused on enhancing
command and control, and although they envisioned a free-flowing information-sharing
environment, in execution commanders could use the systems to micromanage their subordinate
units. Meanwhile soldier and fighting vehicle initiatives were secondary. Also, in the face of
budget cuts, the Army sought to maintain as much of the old Cold War force structure as

18 Victory Starts Here, TRADOC history, 33
19 TRADOC Commander General Frederick Franks attempted to revise Army doctrine, such as FM 100-5 in 1993,
to reflect these new realities. However, during the 1990s, American strategic employment concepts, doctrinal
studies, and force structures remained divorced from these realities. See Frederick Kagan, Finding the Target (New
possible, with its division and corps-centered organization and support structures. The
generating force’s initiatives in force development were distinctly incongruous with the
requirements of the operational Army in Somalia, Bosnia, and Kosovo. Eventually, the Army’s
experiences in Kosovo would force General Shinseki to introduce a revised “transformation”
initiative in 1999 in order to attempt to correct the dissonance between the Army’s material
programs, doctrine, and organizational mindset with the reality that the Army would continue to
be expected to deploy rapidly to contingency operations with a variety of force packages. The
Stryker platform and Stryker organization was an example of this response. Interestingly, the
generating force seemed to largely discount or ignore the innovation and adaptation that was now
occurring in the deployed operational Army in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Dissonance in the Army’s strategic thought was matched by dissonance in the human
dimension of the Army’s organizational culture. The multiple Selective Early Retirement
Boards and Reduction In Force actions over a period of 4 years in the early 1990s were a
tremendously traumatic experience for the officer corps. Officers who had given over a decade
of service, and in some cases fought in Desert Storm, were forced into retirement. Promotion
rates were dramatically cut, as the Army’s “up or out” policies, enshrined in the Defense Officer
Personnel Management Act of 1980, and adherence to officer timelines by personnel
management made themselves felt with a vengeance. The officer corps perceived that the way to
survive these drawdowns and have a successful career was to follow a prescribed career timeline
focused primarily on their branch’s assessment of the best assignments for developing technical
and tactical competence in that branch. Surveys and interviews of service college students in the
mid-1990s revealed that careerism within the officer corps had increased and as well as growing
concerns about command climate and a return of ‘zero-defect’ standards. By this time, the
CTCs had become largely rote scenarios on familiar terrain that focused on the execution of the
correct process of MDMP and battle management instead of initiative, risk-taking, and
experimentation. Battalion command had become the signpost of a successful career and
selection for command was achieved by serving in repeated troop assignments. The “dual track”
OPMS concept was fundamentally compromised by these trends and would eventually be
revised. In 1998, a new OER was introduced that included a centrally-tracked forced distribution
rating for senior raters. While this action was laudable for its attempt to correct OER inflation, it
also caused significant stress in the officer corps as many officers remained uncertain of the
impact of “center of mass” ratings – not surprising for an officer corps that still vividly
remembered the drawdowns. Finally, the Army repeatedly offered junior officers the option to
leave the service early, before their initial obligation was complete. Officers succeeded by

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20 See Don M. Snider and Gayle L. Watkins, “The Future of Army Professionalism: A Need for Renewal and
John C. Faith, “The Overcontrolling Leader: The Issue is Trust,” Army, June 1997. LTG (ret.) Ulmer noted in his
News and World Report, commentary in service journals, and other evidence would be unconvincing singularly.
However, comments from the House National Security Committee as reported in the 14 July issue of Army Times
and the findings from the recent large survey associated with sexual harassment, confirming other recent survey
data, leave little doubt that there are more than superficial problems with elements of the climate of the Army.”
Ulmer, one of the two authors of the 1970 Army War College Study on Military Professionalism noted
disconcerting similarities in the Army’s ethical climate of the early 1970s and late 1990s.
21 On potential stress of forced distribution of OER rating, see Ulmer, “Military Leadership into the 21st Century,”
1998.
adjusting to the realities of this new organizational culture; yet many were disheartened. In
short, generating force personnel management practices during the drawdown and the 1990s did
not seem to match the Army’s stated values about valuing people.

Additionally, the Army’s deployments to Somalia, Kuwait, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo
dramatically increased the Army’s deployment tempo into the late 1990s. The cycle of train-up
on stability tasks, deployment, and then return and train-up on combat tasks exacerbated strains
on soldiers, leaders, and Army Families.22 Moreover, many officers and soldiers accepted
stability missions just as disdainfully as their senior leadership did. To many officers and
soldiers, these stability missions were antithetical to the organizational culture of the Army.23

During these deployments, rank-and-file military leaders became extremely risk averse
due to both political and senior military leadership demands to avoid casualties and mistakes,
and this attitude trickled down the force through extremely restrictive ROE and close supervision
by commanders. Coupled with the pressures of the drawdown, a “zero-defect” mentality
reemerged and influenced the execution of these missions and many other Army activities
(whether it was command & staff issues or company DWIs). Communication and information
technology such as e-mail, PowerPoint, and even FBCBT was coming online that facilitated
increased micromanagement by senior leaders.

During this era, the Army seemed increasingly focused (at times almost primarily
focused) on being a moralizing institution. The issue of homosexuals in the military was a flash
point that revealed differences between the culture of segments of society and many Army
members. However, the Army’s senior leadership also directed much energy at addressing the
internal moral climate of the Army. During the 1990s, Army senior reacted broadly to a few
highly publicized moral lapses involving alcohol, sexual improprieties, or discrimination. Army
leadership instituted new mandatory training, new oversight systems, and gimmicky pocket cards
or dog tags, all of which were meant to encourage a teetotaling lifestyle but seemed to indicate a
lack of trust in soldiers and a propensity to blame commanders. Army officers and soldiers
perceived these measures as “cover your ass” actions from the generating force that were
reaching the point of becoming training distracters and were counter-productive towards building
a warfighting culture. Something bigger seemed amiss in the Army if the senior leaders felt
compelled during the late 1990s to bombard the force with an excessive number of official
publications and Military Review articles about leadership and values.24

By the late 1990s, the pains of the drawdown had been replaced by a growing retention
problem among its junior officers, perhaps the most demonstrable indicator of problems in the
Army’s organizational culture.25 This retention problem continued unabated even after the

22 See Don M. Snider and Gayle L. Watkins, “The Future of Army Professionalism: A Need for Renewal and
Redefinition, Parameters, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Autumn, 2000): 5-20. See also Carl A. Castro and Amy B. Adler,
23 For a critique of this organizational culture, see Ralph Peters, “Heavy Peace” (Parameters, Vol. 29, No. 2, Spring
24 See Military Review articles between 1996 and 1999. Several dozen articles and book reviews addressed various
paradigms, teaching techniques, frameworks, pointers of leadership and values.
25 Casey Wardynski, David S. Lyle, Michael J. Colarusso, “Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for
Success: A Proposed Human Capital Model Focused Upon Talent,” Strategic Studies Institute, April 2009.
economic downturn of 2000. The organizational culture described above caused a significant portion of young officers to conclude that a career in the Army was unappealing and incongruous with the lives of job-satisfaction, self-fulfillment, and balance that they desired.\textsuperscript{26} Additionally, fundamental changes in the U.S. economy from the industrial-age to the information-age placed high value on managers that could process information quickly, manage projects, and solve problems—attributes that made junior military officers highly desirable in the corporate world.\textsuperscript{27} Junior officers perceived senior officers (LTC and above) as insensitive to the pressures, demands, and stifling facets of service in the 1990s Army.\textsuperscript{28} The Army’s organizational culture was becoming less attractive when compared to the changing organizational culture of businesses—which was moving to flatter organizations, with more individual autonomy, more opportunities for advanced education or ‘retooling’ one’s career, and greater possibilities of quick career advancement.

One response to the Army’s personnel resource dilemma was the privatization of generating force functions beginning in the mid-1990s—a development that had unrecognized implications for the Army’s organizational culture. This solution was abetted by a political culture that embraced the idea that the private market provided services better and more efficiently than the government. Many ROTC instructor positions were filled with contractors. The management of material development, writing of concept development and doctrine, and construction of after-action reviews and lessons learned products was increasingly filled by contractors.\textsuperscript{29} Many of these measures were undertaken under the auspices of General Shinseki’s “Manning the Force,” which had the goal of supporting the operational force by improving its manpower levels. However, they also had the effect of reducing the number of operational army officers that would bring their experiences to the generating force and making generating force positions appear less attractive to the officers in the operational Army.\textsuperscript{30}

By the end of the 1990s, the Army’s culture already contained many tensions that would become exacerbated by the experiences in the 2000s. Stepping back, we can see continuities that can inform our examination of the Army’s culture today. Doctrine and force structure developed in the generating force’s transformation experiments seemed far removed from the dirty, gritty, uncertain nature of conflict the operational army observed on various contingency missions or in the news in places like Chechnya. The primary thrust of Army material innovation seemed to be to plug every soldier and leader into the network—a development many in the Army viewed with trepidation for its micromanagement potentialities and because it viewed technology as a means of achieving efficiencies in manpower and other elements of combat power.\textsuperscript{31} Personnel management seemed dogmatistic in its standards of success and deaf to

\textsuperscript{26} Leonard Wong, “Generations Apart: Xers and Boomers in the Officer Corps,” Strategic Studies Institute paper (October 2000), 4-17.
\textsuperscript{27} Wardynski, “Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy,” 11.
\textsuperscript{29} Richard Kohn, “Tarnished Brass: Is the U.S. Military Profession in Decline” in World Affiars (Spring 2009).
the concerns of its constituents. The optempo and requirements of garrison life was stifling to officers and NCOs – the Army was simply less and less fun. The values discourse in the Army had become less and less genuine and seemed disconnected from creating a warrior ethos. A distinct gap in perceptions was growing between young officers in the field and senior Army leaders. Repeated ‘peacekeeping’ deployments coupled with an increasingly uninterested public expanded the disconnect between the Army and American society and their common understanding of the warrior ethos. It would not be fair to blame these tensions on any particular leader. In fact, many generating force agencies were attempting to solve the problems they perceived as germane to generating the future operational force. However, the events of the 1990s reflected an generating force that was drifting due to a belief that the Army was in an interregnum period in which it would face no peer competitor until 2020 and because domestic political concerns of defending the Army’s relevance and ethics took precedence. During the 1990s, the Army’s strategic employment concepts, doctrine and force structure development, and personnel management systems suffered from the lack of a clear, realistic articulation and vision of the Army’s warfighting purpose and means for the first decade of the 2000s.

32 Wong, “Generations Apart.”
Annex C: US Army Culture: A British Perspective

“A virtue of having coalition partners with a legacy of shared sacrifice during difficult military campaigns is that they can also share candid observations. Such observations are understood to be professional exchanges among friends to promote constructive discussion that can improve the prospect of coalition successes for which all strive.”


Introduction

Currently there is a debate within the US Army about how the culture of the Army has changed since 1999. The purpose of this self examination is not known, but it is assessed that it is most probably linked to four key objectives:

1. Winning the current fight;
2. Preserving the All Volunteer Force;
3. Preserving, promoting and enhancing the positive aspects of US Army culture;
4. Identifying, minimizing and removing the negative aspects of US Army culture.

When discussing a subject like culture, there can clearly be no definitive right or wrong. Culture is highly subjective, more discursive by nature, and arguably less suited to a scientific assessment, systematic calculation or powerpoint chart. There will therefore, and inevitably must be, an acceptance in advance of a healthy amount of subjectivity. It is also important to record the assumption that this debate has been generated by the leadership of an organisation which is not only comfortable with, but positively encourages self examination.

In providing a distinctly British response, the aim has been to avoid both sycophancy and simple criticism for criticism’s sake, but to present constructive opinion which is intended to contribute to and stimulate the debate. The paper is as much about external confirmation of certain well known trends as it is about making earth shattering revelations. Disparate British opinion has been sought both informally and sensitively. What follows is almost exclusively the compilation and distillation of the opinions of a small but influential group of senior British officers, most of whom have operational experience with the US Army. All contributions have been made in good faith, in the spirit underpinning the American request and on an understanding of non-attribution.

Definition

A British military academic defines Culture as follows:
“Culture is that which mediates between human societies or organisations and the external world. It is the different ideas, myths, norms and symbols, as well as practices, routines and rituals, through which we order and interpret the world. In the military context, ‘culture’ is a distinct and lasting set of beliefs and values and preferences regarding the use of force, its role and effectiveness in political affairs. This includes an array of factors, such as prevailing attitudes, habits and values of the military and its parent society, geopolitical position, historical experience, political development, and received wisdom. Strategic culture theory typically assigns several characteristics to culture, which include continuity over time, an enduring set of values and behaviour, rooted in memories, ideas, particular conditions, and by features distinctive or peculiar to specific societies.”

In addition, several academics have highlighted the fact that culture does not sit in isolation from context, and that context will have both historical and current characteristics.

**Historical Context**

The time frame set for the debate on US Army culture was expressed as the last 10 years, which coincides approximately with the end of the Kosovo campaign. That said, any British perspective of US Army culture will always wish to emphasise the longer term historical context before committing to observations on the present. In particular, it is felt it is worth reviewing why, according to British opinion, the US Army was the way it was in 1999. This is surely justified as the ethos and culture of every army is the product of its history and experience.

The work of a previous British military attaché to the USA is useful in describing this historical context and has been drawn on here almost verbatim. He argues that there have been four dominant events in the development of the US Army ethos and culture: the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the Second World War and Vietnam. From these came the four great underlying and enduring themes of American military culture:

- **Liberty.** The US Army was born, and remains in American iconography, a citizen army. For an American, the Army is the guardian of the people’s freedom, intimately linked with ideas of democracy and self determination.
- **Will.** The Civil War turned out to be an appalling trial of will, in which both sides were tested to the limit as they absorbed the financial, social and above all human cost of the conflict. This profound experience has affected the US Army ever since, where the ability to rise to a challenge and to prevail over difficulties by force of will and character is seen as one of the key elements of successful leadership.
- **Operational Art.** Both the Revolutionary and Civil Wars demonstrated the dominance of the operational over the tactical in large-scale operations, and the need for commanders to be empowered (and of course capable) to command effectively at the operational level. From this, and the question of will, comes the long-standing American tradition of the General as the semi-autonomous “big man”, personally setting the agenda of operations and leading his men by the force of his personality.
- **Resources.** From the Civil War onwards, but especially since the Second World War, American officers have been taught to think big in terms of resources, both manpower, materiel, technology and finance.
The former attaché believes that each of these themes were reinforced and validated by the Second World War, so that the war in Vietnam, where each was found wanting, came as a serious shock. The US Army found itself rejected by its own citizens, outmatched in will, outplayed operationally by the enemy, and unable to harness its overwhelming advantage in resources effectively. After Vietnam, the US Army made an almost subliminal, but nonetheless profound, assessment that the problem lay in the fact that the Army, and indeed the nation, was institutionally and culturally unsuited to fighting this sort of warfare. A number of factors played into this decision, above all the feeling that the US had been “suckered” into fighting the war on the enemy’s terms, where its materiel and technological advantages could be negated by the determination or fanaticism of the enemy. Allied to this was the belief that the US political system, driven by the need for quick, clean results, was constitutionally unable to sustain the long grinding commitment that a counter-insurgency operation required. The solution therefore lay, not in addressing specific organisational, doctrinal or training shortcomings of the force, but in making sure that the Army stayed out of the counterinsurgency business and concentrated on the type of conventional manoeuvre warfare in which it excelled. Events through the 1980s and 90s seemed to confirm the wisdom of this approach. Short, violent, “technological” wars (notably the Falklands) seemed to be broadly successful, while protracted, low intensity operations (i.e the Russian attempts to subdue Afghanistan and the embarrassing Vietnam-like “reprise” in Mogadishu) seemed destined to failure. The representatives of the ever-powerful US military industrial complex were for their own reasons vocally reinforcing this message, with the call for ever more spending on military technology. Under these influences, the doctrine continued to be refined and increasingly narrowed until it reached is apogee with the development of the Air-Land Battle concept, the bloodless victory in the Cold War and its apparently triumphant vindication during Desert Storm.

There were some awkward counter-indicators, but these were mostly ignored. The political ambiguity of the US over the Northern Ireland issue made serious study of the uncertain and painstaking progress of the British Army there more difficult, and the almost totally ineffective bombing campaign in Kosovo/Serbia was brushed aside by the euphoria of the unexpectedly easy ground operation. So, by 2001, the US Army found itself almost totally configured, in terms of doctrine, ethos, organisation and equipment, to fight intensive manoeuvre warfare, organised around its traditional cultural themes of will, the operational art and resources. The conventional wisdom about future operations was based on four key assumptions:

- American society would not tolerate the loss of more than a handful of American soldiers in any operation, nor could the American political system sustain a protracted operation;
- Future operations would be short and violent, because US technological, materiel and information dominance was so overwhelming that it would quickly crush any likely near-term enemy with minimal losses;
- The Americans could rely on less well equipped (and, implicitly, less aggressive) allies to do peace support after the US had broken the back of the resistance;
- No serious threat to US military dominance was expected in the near term, until the Chinese, or possibly a resurgent Russia, started to challenge US technological hegemony.
In the event, all of these assumptions proved to be completely wrong, but they had two damaging side-effects:

- It encouraged a narrow-minded, aggressive military culture, with little concern for the longer-term consequences or more subtle social and societal considerations. If the role of the US military was to deliver the short, sharp knock-out blow, leaving the allies to manage the aftermath, there was little need to study the culture or doctrine of potential opponents – it was immaterial. These themes were much in evidence in the US military in the late 1990s, as exemplified by the ethos of force-on-force manoeuvre between evenly matched forces with minimal cultural context prevalent at the NTC at that time.

- It contributed to the unhealthy dominance of the DOD in the development of foreign and security policy, and allowed a small clique of neo-conservative Republicans, headed by the then Secretary for Defense, too much space to indulge some of their more extravagant strategic theories, notably Information Dominance, Network-centric (rather than enabled) Operations, and “Shock & Awe.”

**Current Context**

The current context in which this debate is being conducted is familiar to all. The Army sits in a climate of political conviction, relative resource freedom, a sense of being at war, enjoying wide popular support and having great confidence in itself – arguably in distinct contrast to other key allies. Within such an environment certain cultural traits, which might otherwise be stifled, are encouraged and allowed to develop. The current context has been epitomised by change.

First, the US Army structure has been reconfigured to sustain a long, open-ended operational commitment:

- The Brigade Combat Team replaced the division as the principle formation for training and deployment;

- Formations became more standardised, in order to facilitate a roulement programme;

- A system of sequential readiness (ARFORGEN), tied to operational commitments, replaced the structure of echeloned formation readiness that is more appropriate for more conventional strategic scenarios.

Second, operational and tactical doctrine was rewritten and training amended accordingly. Out went force-on-force manoeuvre, in came patrolling, cultural awareness training, counter-IED, counter-ambush, languages etc. Much of this change was driven by lessons learned in the field, the so-called “learning from the edge”, but to an impressive degree, the Americans went back to first principles. General Petraeus, the key architect of the new US Army counterinsurgency doctrine, actively studied, and directly drew on, the lessons from classic counterinsurgency history – especially British history such as Malaya and Northern Ireland. Indeed, it is arguable that the Americans now are more purist followers of Templar and Kitson than the British are.
However, from the beginning, it was clear that there was a third and more radical area of change at the core of this programme - the culture and ethos of leadership in the Army. The Army was arguably looking for a completely new paradigm, based on genuine delegation of initiative, intellectual flexibility and curiosity, and a rebirth of the understanding that warfare is fundamentally a human endeavour, where actions must be judged by their strategic effect, not their tactical impact. This is exemplified by initiatives such as the Human Dimension concept, the central role of the commander as emphasized in FM 3-0 and the soldier at the centre of the equipment programme. This process continues today with the current Commanding General Training and Doctrine Command significantly stating that his number one priority for change within his command is Leader Development. In addition, General Schoomaker repeatedly insisted that the US Army must be a "learning organisation", and ordered all his senior officers to read selected articles and studies that were overtly and sometimes unwarrantedly critical of the US military.

A British military academic supports the belief that there is a cultural development happening around the renaissance in counterinsurgency technique and study within the US Army. First, this re-education, where the Army is now reforming itself around the experiences of Iraq and Afghanistan, is driven ‘from below,’ in particular mid-level officers, who have been dissatisfied with the traditional approach of the US Army and its failures in dealing with insurgency. This marks a generational element of Army Culture. In Linda Robinson’s study of the Petraeus Revolution (Tell me How this Ends), she speaks of Cold War Generals, Bosnia Colonels and Iraq Majors. So this is a new ‘layer’ within the subcultural differences of the Army.

Strengths

The British perceive the following areas to be the strengths in current US Army culture.

1. **Strength of the Nation.** The US Army prides itself on being the Strength of the Nation. This is not something created by McCann Erickson in their swanky Manhattan offices - this is a fact. We currently witness a leading edge brand and a strong image, which is fully supported by the people. To underline this, an eminent British military historian assesses that what is very important is the fact that the US Army is “pervasively national” in a sense that the British Army is not. The British people support our servicemen but have absolutely no idea about what they are or what they do. We are arguably a post-military society, that does not know the difference between a brigadier and a bombardier. Conversely, the Americans have their armed forces genuinely to heart. The same military historian recalls being spat at when in uniform in the USA in 1969 (he served with the 1/129 Infantry, Illinois National Guard). One contrasts that experience with the genuine care for serving personnel and for veterans now so clearly visible in the USA, the applause in airports etc. The Army cultivates this strong brand and self image internally and externally. They have continued the drive established under the post-Vietnam “Army of Excellence”. “Army Strong” has terrific resonance, as does “Family Strong.” Significantly, under current arrangements, the US government is backing these strap lines with cash and perhaps it is fair to contrast this state of affairs with previous eras when the US Army had other compelling slogans which accorded less well with reality on post.
2. A **Strong Sense of Purpose**. All external observers commented on the strong sense of purpose visible in the US Army, just one signature indicator of a motivated and determined force. American officers, soldiers, families and arguably civilians demonstrate an indomitable belief in what is being fought for and the inevitability of success. The tragic events of 9/11 clearly played a pivotal role in the forging of this purpose but there is certainly a renewed or reinforced culture of duty and commitment across all components, Active, Reserve and National Guard. The work ethic is powerful as is the “Can-do” approach. Some have attributed this to the manifestation of a wider US attitude that reflects concepts of Manifest Destiny and City on a Hill. Whilst the British commentators acknowledge the strength of this approach, they also note the potential weakness. There is little understanding that the aspects of Western society, and particularly America, that we hold dear (individualism, democracy, privacy, equality etc) are not viewed as unqualified virtues in the Middle East. They attract and repel in equal measure, and unthinking application plays into the hands of ideologues manipulating conservative societies. Some balance their comments about the US Army as an effective learning organisation (see next paragraph) with criticism verging on regret that the US Army is remarkably lacking in its curiosity about the wider world, either in its capacity to teach the Americans, or in analysing its characteristics so as to apply the right responses. All of that said, the Strong Sense of Purpose is deemed to be a considerable strength.

3. A **Learning Organisation**. Although most British Army officers marvel at the size, resources and effectiveness of the US Army in the Fight, the area which attracts most positive comment is the growth of the US Army into a considerable and thriving Learning Organisation. General Schoomaker would surely approve of how far they have come. Americans and British alike would probably agree that becoming a true Learning Organisation is the only means of ensuring rapid and swift adaptation in the Contemporary Operating Environment. British observers identify the following attributes of such an organisation within the modern day US Army:

a. Being able to transform adeptly or quickly enough to meet the current security challenges;

b. Ensuring that adaptation and innovation at the tactical level has been matched by institutional and organizational change at the top, although they would also observe that change has been much quicker in the Operating Force than in the Generating Force;

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34 Ideology of *Manifest Destiny* reflected both the burgeoning pride that characterized American nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century and the idealistic vision of social perfection that fueled so much of the reform energy of the time. It rested on the idea that America was destined – by God and by history – to expand its boundaries over a vast area. (Brinkly in *The Unfinished Nation*).

35 *City upon a Hill* is a phrase derived from the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew: "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden." This phrase entered the American lexicon with John Winthrop's sermon "A Model of Christian Charity" (1630). JF Kennedy: “We must always consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill—the eyes of all people are upon us.”

36 A process by which an organization uses new knowledge or understanding gained from experience or study to adjust institutional norms, doctrine and procedures in ways designed to minimize previous gaps in performance and maximize future successes (Richard Downie).
c. Being able to establish an organisational culture that in turn shapes the ability of an
organisation to learn.

Many in the British Army have commented upon the appetite to learn, the tangible desire and the
ability to adapt currently discernible in the US Army. Over recent years British officers on
operations have witnessed an American ability to accept failure and learn from it.
Unprecedented times and challenges have forced the development of new and existing
procedures and processes, which have resulted in an enviable reputation as an agile and
responsive learning organisation. Amongst a British audience, in comparison, there is a concern
as to whether the British Army has matched American success. It could be argued that the
British Army has simply refined its existing "learning" processes, often with sound but perhaps
sub-optimal results. In contrast, the American cousins have enjoyed an almost revolutionary
approach to learning. Certain departments are easily identifiable as "jewels in the crown" of this
learning process (i.e. The Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL)), but, perhaps most
significantly, the whole US Army, clearly with an Operating Force lead, appears to have taken a
step change in approach and has created an impressive learning culture across the commands.
Operating and generating forces alike understand the need to learn and adapt quickly. The
change is evident on an almost daily basis, for example, in the approach to new and existing
document and concepts, the accelerated capabilities initiatives, the outcomes-based approach to
Initial Military Training, and the refinement of leadership development. Of course, the
imperative for a country at war for seven years is clear to all and there is little complacency.
Currently, there is much focus on operationalising the Generating Force, most conspicuously at
Training and Doctrine Command, and a casual observer quickly realizes that this on-going
learning and adaptation process is far from over, if it will ever be.

Some British observers have been keen to stress the historical precedent for this ability to learn
and argue that it is not a new phenomenon. They would claim, and with justification, that
historically the US have been trained and equipped for past wars and have not always been well
poised or flexible enough for the future. This was true in the First World War, the Second World
War, Vietnam, arguably Somalia and obviously the recent conflicts. That is probably not
surprising, when the Army is in industrial style training and equipping. What is an absolute
truth, is that the US Army learns very quickly from their mistakes and surprise everyone with the
speed that they can turn around the huge machine. What has been witnessed since 2004/5 to
today is truly impressive and has left the remainder of the first world armies in their wake. And,
of course, it is interesting for the outsider to muse how this change in learning culture came
about – was it an incremental process which "just happened" as a result of operational
circumstance, and subsequently filtered throughout the Army, or was this a top-down policy shift
with a clear vision and direction from above? Its significance for success is clear to all. But, as
we proceed through an Era of Persistent Conflict, the astute commander will be keen to evaluate
how to maintain this cultural characteristic, when the operational tempo reduces and to ensure
the Army does not have to experience a couple of unnecessarily painful years at the start of the
next conflict.

Finally on this subject, some commentators view the infectious enthusiasm for operational
learning in the context of the US Army’s reverence for advanced academic learning. There is a
firm application of high academic standards for new entrants and across the institution the
respect for formal academic advancement, often through self improvement, is very strong. Throughout a career, the individual is presented with abundant opportunities and encouragement to develop his own personal education. Formal learning is increasingly an essential element of every leader’s development and the theme of education pervades much of the modern Army’s attractiveness to new recruits. This “energy for education” clearly benefits the Army but it is the wider American society which is the ultimate benefactor.

4. Non-Kinetic versus Kinetic. Over the last decade it is abundantly clear that the US Army has had to adapt its war-fighting methodology due to the experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, and it has done so most effectively. In particular, they have adapted their focus of high technology dependency with a kinetic focus to a more non-kinetic or full spectrum approach to ensure success in the hybrid environment or the so-called “war among the people”. The British believe that this has required a significant paradigm shift across the board and constitutes a major change in US Army culture. The “mechanical baggage” of precision, certainty, technological supremacy, fast action, impatience and “shock and awe” has been replaced by the essential ingredients of the human endeavour that is counterinsurgency, namely patience, emotional understanding, introspection and enquiry, an explicit lack of certainty, an ability to live with ambiguity, subtlety and nuance, and a deep and genuine respect for others. The Americans have identified the fact that ‘Phase 4’ operations are critical and must be correctly resourced and planned, and that kinetic operations, whilst remaining important, are not necessarily the key to long term success.

One senior officer currently in theatre remembers Lieutenant General Dave Barno stating that “The American soldier is genetically programmed to kill,” and going on to explain why it was difficult to change that cultural norm, which was a key point in his approach in Afghanistan. The same British Officer assesses that the US Army have gone a long way in doing just that. In his recent tour in Iraq, he saw “huge signs at all levels that the understanding of non-kinetic operations was deeply rooted” – he added that some commanders grasped this better than others, but that is a human factor that applies everywhere, not a US Army failing. Others describe the shift as the USS Yorktown moment: “The Americans stared failure in the face, recognised where their ‘culture’ was wrong and took the big decisions and the big risks needed to put things right. From the senior echelons down the Americans worked out why they were losing and they did the big things at incredible tempo to reverse that trend - amazing for a huge organisation. They replaced failing leaders and failed ideas with men who were up for the challenge and who could think of new ways of doing things. The sense of urgency was incredibly energising.” But the process will take years to complete and one senior officer, a huge admirer of achievements to date in this area, believes it is incumbent on the Army’s leadership “to keep their foot on the pedal” if the necessary COIN mindset is to become “genuinely second nature.” Even such matters as the Soldier’s Creed may increasingly appear incompatible with the subtlety required in “War amongst the People,” perhaps no longer needing to promise to “destroy the enemies of the United States in close combat”.

Interestingly, these views are reinforced by Britain’s premier military historian. He classes it as “a profound and significant paradigm shift” and that the British have not seen anything quite like it. He expands by stating that the US Army has embraced counterinsurgency in a remarkably thoroughgoing way, with everyone from stars to stripes embracing the new doctrine: “Americans
sing from the same sheet of FM 3-0; the British have regimental sheets!” Another officer
reinforces the pivotal significance of embracing doctrine but questions whether this is change or
merely reinforcing traditional strengths and a belief in the efficacy of doctrine? On balance, he
believes that it is a cultural change in approach because it had led to a more de-centralized and
flexible way of thinking at all levels. Brigade, Battalion and company commanders have really
applied the doctrine and adopted it to fit the circumstances.

Of course, whilst many in the US Army will be keen to applaud a “job well done”, the aware
military commander will grapple with the challenges of how to be able to incorporate the
benefits and capability requirements of kinetic and non-kinetic in a balanced and measured way.
He will not want to be an “either or” merchant, so keenly desirable to the bean counters in the
Pentagon. The Army will therefore work hard at the difficult and unattractive task of
determining an appropriate aimpoint, in order to achieve the appropriate strategic balance. It will
do this in the knowledge that it may have to change that aimpoint over time and, that it may not
get it exactly right – but at least it will have avoided missing the mark completely and
consequently the Army will be better prepared. In so doing, the Army may also have progressed
from a reputation for being the most kinetic and destructive organisation on the planet to one
which is universally recognised as a force for good.

5. Aware versus Arrogant. The US Army today is certainly a more reflective, more
circumspect and less arrogant Army than it was before 2001. Most British commentators would
probably classify Cultural Awareness as a strength with caveats, rather than the reverse. Ten
years ago, most British would have been justified in branding the US Army as overly confident
at best and arrogant at worse - of course, when it comes to Arrogance, the British Army remains
the world leader! The US Army has not been helped by their perception of the world, or
themselves, albeit this has been changed dramatically in the school of hard knocks. Maps of Iraq
and Afghanistan with surrounding countries in white, as if these places sit as islands in
geographical isolation, do not help. General Fastabend’s line that the US wanted to view the
Iraqis as brown mid-Western Lutherans had an element of truth in it. This, combined with a
frankly dismissive attitude to the Arabs and the Middle East in general, helps explains many of
the US attitudes that proved so counter-productive. But the importance of Cultural Awareness
had been firmly acknowledged with significant changes to pre-deployment training and the
imminent release of a by historical standards revolutionary Army Culture and Foreign Language
Strategy (ACFLS). But this work-in-progress will remain a major challenge for a country which,
due to its size and nature, is not naturally cognisant of other countries and cultures. The
challenge is conceivably a national one and not just a matter of turning a newly recruited 20 year
old into a culturally aware warrior during an intense period of Initial Military Training.

6. Courage. Few outsiders would dare to challenge the courage of the modern US soldier as
witnessed repeatedly around the world. The stories of personal valour abound, yet it is now
sometimes hard to remember that only a decade ago US forces were perceived as “risk averse”. One
serving officer recalls newspaper articles criticising the heavily protected Camp Bondsteel
in Bosnia and also President Clinton’s famous public announcement that he would not in any
circumstances introduce ground forces into Kosovo. Of course, the events of 9/11 changed much
of that. Initially in Afghanistan the US was able to defeat the Taliban with minimum losses and
a few may even have begun to believe that the Rumsfeld ‘doctrine’ of invasion and victory ‘on
the cheap’ was indeed possible, but this was essentially a political view, which a predominantly loyal military establishment played along with even if their history taught them differently. The readily discernible levels of personal courage are a clear strength of the culture.

7. **Quality of the Soldier.** Although improvements in the quality of the soldier joining the US Army were evident before the decade under consideration\(^3\)\(^7\), it is important to note the continued change in the quality of the individual American soldier. Effective recruiting and retention tools, consistently high results in both areas and an impressive desire among the nation’s youth to serve, with supply outstripping demand, have ensured that the modern American soldier is much better educated and more mature (average age is 22.5 years old) than many of his/her counterparts in other countries. This results in a soldier who is easier to train and better equipped to understand the purpose behind his training. There is also a compelling argument that Counterinsurgency demands cleverer, more mature soldiers who can operate effectively and “think on their feet” in the complex environment “among the people.”

8. **Approach to Training.** British observers believe that the US Army is now better trained than they used to be in many different ways. The MRX approach is wide-ranging, flexible and demanding. The superficiality of National Training Center tests has been replaced with operational experience and reality. The Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills approach ensures relevance in initial training and Outcomes Based Training has proved remarkably effective.

9. **Uniformity.** Most British observers mention the growth over time in the uniformity of the US Army, which adds to an impression of discipline and professionalism. Notwithstanding reputation-negative episodes such as Abu Graib, which occur in all armies, US soldiers of all components are uniformly dressed, equipped and trained. They look smart, fit, motivated and disciplined, in a way that speaks of mutual respect and frankness between officers and men. They have ‘fighting spirit’ and a thinking ‘warrior ethos’. When squads of American soldiers move cautiously down a street, whether in Mosul or Kandahar, they look, are equipped and operate in a uniformed, disciplined and professional manner – a key strength for any fighting force on the world stage.

**Weaknesses**

The British perceive the following areas to be the potential weaknesses in current US Army culture.

1. **Sustainability.** Some British commentators have observed that the US Army has never been in better shape and yet never been more fragile. They observe that the stress of multiple tours has come at a cost. They wonder how sustainable the current tempo is, even with a drawdown in Iraq and whilst much time and effort is focused on realising an effective ARFORGEN and achieving the elusive nirvana of “balance”. Recent commitments to higher troop levels in Afghanistan and capping the active component at 45 BCTs will not make this quest any easier. In the absence of an underpinning intellectual narrative, there is a danger that the current fight will be allowed to be the only “demand regulator”. An American audience will of course point to the truly remarkable recruiting and retention figures consistently achieved over recent times.

\(^3\)\(^7\) ASVAB scores increased considerably in 1993 and were consistently maintained thereafter.
and applauded previously in this paper as a sign that the system is not under pressure. Others, however, will be less complacent and mindful of other less encouraging indicators, such as PTSD and suicide figures above the societal norms. Some British also identify a more bleak development: for the first time in decades, the US Army has to cope with the reality of tens of thousands of wounded, maimed and psychologically damaged or distressed troops. They question whether the Americans have sufficient infrastructure, expertise or personnel to deal with the volume of non-fatal casualties and how this will impact on sustainability. At the far end of the spectrum, some senior British figures fear that the Fight has taken “the stuffing” out of the US military. The intensity of the fight and frequency and length of operational deployments means that the Americans are “burning themselves out”. They are consuming capability at a faster rate than they are generating or regenerating it. The British compare the long tour culture of the Army with that of the USMC. There is a view that too many officers and soldiers look ‘shot away’ – not a universal opinion, it must be stressed, but an informed one nonetheless. Others also note that traditionally the US Army is not naturally patient – more naturally committed to an explosive game, like American football, and keen on quick results. The Era of Persistent Conflict and “war among the people” will require greater strategic patience and therefore considerable endurance.

2. Hierarchical. It is almost universally felt among the British that the US Army continues to be overly hierarchical, too centralized and too conformist. Most of the current senior officers in the US Army are now post the Vietnam generation but were undoubtedly coloured by that very painful experience. In dealing with the lessons from that period an undesirable blame culture sprung up which still pervades the force. There are some very notable exceptions to this but there is little doubt that there are a great number of officers who are content to do what they are told, right or wrong, because they cannot be held to account if things go wrong. It is felt by some that there are a group who are entirely happy with this situation but in the end, of course, it stifles initiative. It will undoubtedly change as younger and more junior people gain command experience in counterinsurgency operations but every time there is an incident, the Army appears to revert to the default hierarchical setting.

The hierarchical culture has significant benefits (no British style “consent and evade” culture here) but the British do relish the questioning subordinate who not only questions privately but also openly and without fear. This criticism of being overly hierarchical has at its heart a deference to command, which always rather surprises the British. Too many American officers are unprepared to confront their seniors with unpalatable truths or contrary views. There is much less of a challenging process in the formulation of plans and even doctrine. Too many decisions are taken at the highest level and some consider it almost “Soviet” in approach. This leads to a very iterative staffing process and little happens until the top of the shop has signed it off. Too many young staff officers are quick to comment “that is a great idea, sir” rather than “I am not so sure”. Of course the Americans like to establish Red Teams who are overtly there to challenge the logic of a plan or course of action, but the culture does not encourage intuitive challenging across the staff across the disciplines. Some would say that the very best US officers do not have this problem, but that the vast majority do! Any casual blogger in military circles will testify to how much “challenge” is out there, but it is not so conspicuous in US headquarters. Finally, one would question the power of senior officers to overrule an objective Human Resources process. Should senior officers be allowed to influence the selection process of their staff and
subordinates quite so much? Should there not be more trust in a system which would bring complementary capability to a commander rather than trusted agents who might only reinforce groupthink?

3. Staff-led versus Commander-driven and Mission Command. From a British perspective it is clear that the US Army remains a staff-led not a command-led organisation. It is observed that there appears to be either a sub-optimal understanding or a sub-optimal application of the philosophy of Mission Command38 within the US Army. Current US COIN doctrine is commander-centric and requires significant decentralisation and a high degree of delegation to junior commanders. These individuals are not yet used to that level of responsibility due to rank and experience and this acts counter to the COIN principles. It must be said, however, that young officers operating in isolated bases in theatre, appear to be learning and applying Mission Command “on the job”. But overall, plodding staff process gets in the way of the tempo their own higher commanders are demanding.

4. Working Practices. There is a widespread belief among the British that American working practices could benefit from some of the change evident in other areas. Overall, it is felt that you can only achieve balance and diversity in people’s outlooks if they lead a balanced and diverse life. “Warrior Monks” are not noted for their worldliness and cultural agility and the Army appears to be full of them. There is absolutely no question about their levels of deep commitment and punishing hours, but to what end? Is it guilt at not being on operations or is it that the hierarchy tacitly encourages such an approach? It is ventured that that the long hours work ethic is actually reducing overall efficiency, as does the unwillingness of General Officers to take leave, which naturally then permeates down the chain of command. Fun and laughter are not conspicuous players in most US Headquarters. By contrast, the British deem that it is important to retain a sense of humour and a lightheartedness, particularly when the business soldiers are in can be so very serious and dire. They also rather balk at the relentless, iterative PowerPoint planning process that drives almost industrial and always overtly optimistic (“Great, Sir!”) activity, and a demanding, high intensity email culture that seems to handicap the force by stymieing human interaction. Reports up the chain are invariably delivered as a presentation and decisions are taken as a result of those presentations. As this work on culture was first discussed, for example, certain staff officers were visibly cringing at the challenge of condensing US Army culture into 4 star level PowerPoint charts! One British officer with significant time in the US Corps HQ in Iraq also believes that the Americans are no longer great listeners because they are so focused on output. The standard bottom-up-approach answer to a question is ‘working it, Sir’ i.e. to appear unsure (or even unclear what was actually being asked for) was to let the side down. The ‘process’ drives ahead remorselessly. The work ethic is so honed that no-one sits and talks a problem through. The young staff officers thrash themselves to the point of exhaustion, and not always to good effect. In addition, the VTC culture is excellent but often cuts right across the chain of command. The British often question whether this is fully understood. Reinforcing the chain of command and thereby insulating junior commanders from

38 A philosophy of decentralised command intended for situations which are complex, dynamic and adversarial. The underlying requirement is the fundamental responsibility to act, or in certain circumstances, to decide not to act, within the framework of the commander’s intent. This approach requires a style of command which promotes decentralised command, trust, freedom and speed of action, and initiative (UK ADP Land Operations, P.115).
the long screwdriver is essential if these young commanders are not to be distracted from their essential tasks.

5. Impatience with Allies. On the subject of allies, a British officer of considerable experience with the Americans reflected that the US Army benchmarks other Armed Forces against how it fights. At the lower level they judge others on their combat delivery; at the higher level they judge others on their commitment and willingness to bear the burden. The US Army tends to judge its coalition partners on what they do with little understanding of the domestic or political constraints put on those forces, the results of which are seen as military weakness or indifference. Another senior officer in theatre senses that the Americans are starting to lose patience with NATO. He feels the Americans recognise the political value of a 41 nation NATO+ alliance, but are irritated by its mechanisms – too often it is seen as another nation state rather than a consensus-based alliance. The American solution, which caused him considerable concern, is often to work around it, and if necessary to ignore it. He witnesses an increased US assertiveness, this time more military than political. He concludes with the summary ‘Follow me or get out of the way,’ which, he admits, would probably be overstating the case, but not by much.

So What?

It is not for this paper to attempt to second guess the “So What?” of the observations above. That will be done better and with greater passion by the custodians of this great Army and its culture. As an American commented recently however: “There is a real sense of where we have been – the challenge is determining where we are going.” It is therefore hoped that the observations might assist in the process of determining what are the Opportunities and the Threats latent in current US Army culture, classic SWOT Analysis stuff! The most senior and the younger elements will understand change, but there is usually a large middle-management in any organisation that are quicker to see threats rather than opportunities. Therefore, returning to the original aim of this paper, namely to provide additional stimulus to the debate, the following deductions and emerging perspectives may have utility.

1. The Weinberg-Powell theory of overwhelming force has been overturned with overwhelming humility and competence, and operational experience is the measure of people and units. The US Army listens more, talks less and recognises that it does not have all the answers. There is an increase in the thoughtful and considered application of the military instrument and a strong hint of moral purpose in how the Army does its business.

2. The US Army is today more independent and self-confident. It was always the military power but not necessarily the military authority. The Germans during the Cold War were the operational manoeuvre and grand tactical experts and the British were the counter-insurgency, internal security experts. Both of those perceived positions have been overtaken by a singularly more confident US Army.

3. The US Army is currently COIN-centric but will adapt to a Hybrid/21st Century focus quicker than other Armies, including the British, can shift from their current balance of conventional and
COIN to Hybrid. The conventional institutional anchor will prevent or at least resist European armies from moving swiftly onto a 21st Century footing.

4. A new sub-culture of missionaries is evolving in the US Army. The current Army contains a range of subcultures, identified broadly by Brian Linn as *Heroes, Guardians and Managers.* Heroes believe that warfighting is the core task of the military, that it is a fundamentally human activity not reducible to scientific control, inherently chaotic and volatile (Patton). Guardians have a background in a preoccupation with continental self-defence, are highly technocratic, approach war as science to be mastered, advocate a narrow concept of defence of the national interest, and believe in a strictly limited scope for military activity; they urge clear exit strategies (Colin Powell, Gian Gentile). Managers approach war as a systemic, organisational phenomenon, historically stressed the importance of American mass mobilisation, and place great value on the ‘management’ of military power (Eisenhower). An eminent British Academic argues that a fourth ‘type’ is emerging. He quotes Andrew Bacevic, the American military historian, who calls them ‘Crusaders,’ but the British academic prefers the term ‘Missionaries.’ ‘Crusaders’, in line with the analogy, are oriented around fighting, whereas ‘Missionaries’ build and convert as their main mission. This, he argues, is the class of cerebral, soldier-intellectual types who have emerged from the war in Iraq particularly under the iconic leadership of General Petraeus. They include some of the most prolific writers and advocates of military change, such as Nagl, McMaster, Mattis and Mansoor. Missionaries approach what some call ‘post-modern’ military activity as an exercise in nation-building, instead primarily of war-fighting. While he cautions that we should not overly schematise this, and clearly both words, “crusaders” and “missionaries,” are loaded terms in the current environment, he reminds us that these “missionaries” are also skilled fighters themselves and they extrapolate from the Long War to see a future where the military will be continuously engaged in ‘armed social work.’ Accordingly, they emphasise the need for the Army to overhaul itself around the increasing complexity of the nation-building environment: interagency coordination, intellectual re-education, stressing cultural awareness, language, governance and security sector reform as a more pressing priority than conventional combat skills. This is not absolute, but their argument is quickly grasped and they have influential supporters in the United Kingdom.

**Conclusion**

The aim of this paper was, as a solid friend of the United States of America over many, many years, to attempt to contribute to the ongoing debate on recent changes in US Army culture. The aim was not to arrive at some earth shattering or revelatory conclusions. Some Americans may even be disappointed with the observations in the paper, anticipating or hoping for a blunter and more aggressive critique, a kind of 2009 sequel to Brigadier Aylwin-Foster’s article39 in 2005! But in so doing, they will have revealed their personal ignorance or misappreciation of the truly spectacular journey this Army has travelled in a short period. In addition, it is a statement of fact that the mood, opinion and affection among British military observers for the US Army at present is particularly high. No American would expect the British to be sycophantic but it is accurate to state, without exception, that our senior leadership is full of admiration for the clearly articulated vision, impressive momentum at all levels and concrete achievements of today’s US Army.

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Army. Some actual quotations from the British Army’s most capable and influential 3 and 4 star officers might serve to illuminate this assertion:

“They (The Americans) remain the most impressive military organisation in the World.”

“I can think of no country better placed to lead the Western world, even the British! The US Army culture has come an immeasurably long way since the Balkans, and its attitudes, organisation and thinking have been honed through the cauldron of long, complex, demanding and damaging operations.”

“Successive Chiefs have understood the depth of latent goodwill, determination and energy that they could draw on to transform the Army, and in General Petraeus, they found a master of the operational art, who was able to apply the traditional cultural themes of the US Army to a new context. It has been an extraordinary achievement.”

“One of the great American Armies in terms of thinking, command, equipment, doctrine and application.”
Annex D: Recommended Reading List


Annex E: Methodological Overview

This essay is based on a wide-ranging review of relevant literature, studies, articles and correspondence about the culture. Research included interviews and sensing sessions conducted with a variety of groups and individuals. The trends identified in the literature were mainly confirmed in interviews and sensing sessions suggesting a broad consensus on the nature of the cultural imbalances identified in the paper.

- Literature – See bibliography
- Interviews
  - Montgometry McFate, Human Terrain Team Program
  - LTG (R) Richard Trefry, Armed Forces Management School
  - BG Rhonda Cornum, Army Comprehensive Soldier Fitness
  - BG Ed Cardon, Deputy Commandant, Command and General Staff College
  - Dr. Michelle Sams, Army Research Institute
  - James Wade, Martin Hoffman, and Louis Michael, Defense Group international
  - LTG (R) William M. Steele
  - MG (R) David Fastabend
- Sensing Sessions
  - A classroom of ~30 uniformed students, Armed Forces Management School
  - The Advanced Strategic Arts Program seminar at the US Army War College
  - A Seminar each of Captains Career Course students from Fort Lee, Fort Benning, and Fort Leonard Wood
  - Two ILE seminars from Command and General Staff College
  - A discussion with senior NCO’s attending the Sergeant’s Major academy
  - A informal meeting with seven professional staff members from the House and Senate Armed Services Committees
- Think Tank engagements
  - Senior Fellow Maren Leed, Center for Strategic and International Studies
  - Center for New American Security, Discussion Panels on Officership hosted by John Nagl
The following document was sent to interview and sensing session participants in advance of their meetings.

“Army Culture” Discussion Read-a-Head

In response to Army Senior Leader discussions, we are writing a paper that examines the effect of recent and ongoing wartime experience on the Army's culture. The paper will be a synthesis of academic writings, previous studies, interviews, group discussion/sensing sessions and data collection. It will serve as a basis for further discussion among senior leaders and, where appropriate, recommend actions to reinforce positive cultural traits and mitigate negative ones. The paper will be completed early this summer.

We have begun with the description of the Army's institutional culture contained in FM 1, The Army. The paper will include the perspectives of external stakeholders and its own micro-cultures. It will identify strengths and weaknesses aiming to answer two fundamental questions:

What behaviors or practices are incongruent with our values, beliefs, and expectations?
What values, beliefs or expectations are being challenged by our experiences, the changing environment and the demands placed upon us?

As part of the writing plan we are engaging a broad spectrum of officers and senior NCO's in discussions to gain their insights and shape the direction of the paper. We are interested in your perceptions of our institutional culture, observations concerning the strategic context within which the Army culture operates, and your recommendations about what aspects of the Army's culture should be sustained or changed. These engagements are ‘non-attribution' venues.

The intent of the sensing session is to gain your insights concerning Army culture. To assist you in preparing for the session, we recommend you read *FM 1 The Army* which establishes the cultural baseline of the Army. We want to go where you want to take the discussion as long as it pertains to cultural issues and not, for example, TTP or process problems. We are interested in how your education, training and operational experiences affect the answers to the two overarching questions highlighted above.

The following additional questions may be used to help initiate discussion.

- As an Army leader, what frustrates you most about the Army?
- What satisfies you the most?
- How has the Army culture changed since 2001?
- What changes would you sustain?
- What changes would you work to mitigate?
- Within the rubric of DOTMLPF – Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leader Development and Education, Personnel and Facilities – where are the cultural foundations firm and where are they soft?

We will record the session on butcher paper/white board and finish with a review that identifies the threads and confirms the issues you identify.
Annex F: To Change an Army (Military Review, March 1983)

TO CHANGE AN ARMY

General Donn A. Starry, US Army

Change is a constant for today's armed forces. With frequently shifting requirements as well as advancing technology, it is imperative that any reforms contribute to a force's ability to operate on the battlefield. The author reviews some changes that have occurred in the past, points out certain requirements associated with change and calls for creative solutions to future needs.

The article is adapted from an address made by General Starry, 10 June 1982, to the US Army War College Committee on a Theory of Combat, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.
REFORM of an institution as large as our Army is problematic under the best of circumstances. The recent history of change in military systems of the world is instructive. Let us examine the story of Sir Ernest D. Swinton’s invention—the tank—as well as the history of the development of concepts for mobile all-arms warfare to illustrate the challenges that would-be reformers face in trying to introduce new ideas.

In the British army, where the idea had its genesis and was the subject of much early development and experimentation, a succession of single-minded tank and mobility enthusiasts persisted in developing the concept of mobile all-arms warfare built around the tank striking force. They did so in the face of persistent opposition by most of their less imaginative peers and superiors. Most of these reformers were “loners.” For the most part, they were argumentative, assertive and hardly ever in agreement—even with one another.

Despite support from Winston Churchill, they were forced to work around an organizational system which abhorred change. In frustration, many went public with their arguments and, by doing so, incurred enmity among their superiors sufficient either to bring on their early retirement from the active ranks or to relegate them to some inconsequential posting.

Although field trials were held to demonstrate the new concepts, those who benefited most from the trials were the Germans. They spawned the blitzkrieg based largely on their own study as well as their study of the writings of the British reformers, J. F. C. Fuller and B. H. Liddell Hart, and the record of the trials on the Salisbury Plain.

As war came to Europe in 1939, the British army found itself with an imperfectly developed concept of all-arms combat based on the tank, to include inadequate tactics, organizations, equipment and training to implement a state of warfare they themselves had invented.

In the US Army, the pioneers were fewer in number, and the institution proved considerably more resistant to change than even the British army. Therefore, the development of a concept of mobile warfare fared even less well. A succession of Army chiefs of staff rejected the idea out of hand. Even such future practitioners of maneuver warfare as General of the Army Douglas MacArthur testified before the Congress that one should not buy too many tanks for they were terribly expensive and quickly became obsolete.

Strongest among the opposition was that bastion of mobile thinking—the US cavalry. Its last chief, Major General John K. Herring, was the most strident, outspoken opponent of the idea of all-arms warfare which was built around the tank.

There were really only two heroes of this drama in our Army. Major General Adna Chaffee and Lieutenant General Daniel Van Voorhis. Without Chaffee, the US Army quite likely would have had no tanks at all in 1940. And, without Van Voorhis, there would not have been an operational concept for armored formations in World War II. As Edward Katzenbach concludes in his fascinating paper, "The Horse Cavalry in the 20th Century," the Army of the most mechanized nation on earth came to the threshold of World War II firmly wedded to strategy, operational art and tactics deeply rooted in the 19th century.

On the other hand, the Germans seemed to have developed, in what retired Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy calls their "genius for war," a much more impressive willingness and ability to adapt to change. Captain Timothy T. Lupfer describes well the German army’s ability to change operational
concepts and tactical schemes in a matter of months in World War I.

Heinz Guderian, reading reports of the armored force trials on the Salisbury Plain, demonstrated the concept with a small force for Adolf Hitler at Kummersdorf in 1934. Kenneth Macksey describes well how the German tank pioneers seized on and matured the preliminary British work on all-arms warfare built around the tank.

With Hitler's blessing of the concept, Guderian, in 18 short months, produced an all-arms panzer division. The division operated within a fairly well-spelled-out doctrinal framework. It included the strategy for mobile warfare; a general operational scheme for how the larger forces would fight; and the organization, tactics and at least a preliminary array of the type of equipment needed to bring the concept from theory to reality. In his new book, The German Army, 1933-45, Albert Seaton describes the German army's remarkable ability to adapt to change in those very turbulent years.

How did they do it? How were the Germans different from the British or the Americans? Several facts stand out which frame the answer and outline a set of requirements necessary to effect change.

First, the Germans had a general staff element whose primary function was to examine the need for change and, when change was decided on, to draw up the necessary programs to make it happen. True, this capability became diffused as Hitler fragmented his army command into the OKW (Armed Forces High Command) and the OKH (Army High Command), an overshadowed army headquarters. Indeed, some of the bitter antagonisms that arose between those two organizations in World War II survived until recently even in the Bundeswehr. Nonetheless, for the critical developmental years, there existed an institutionalized framework for examining the need for changing doctrine—strategy, operational art, tactics, describing the equipment, organizational training and other changes needed; and producing the impetus for change through the office of the inspektur.

Second, the German mavericks were all products of the enormously demanding and rigorous officer selection and training system characteristic of the German army to this day. Mavericks they may have been, but all had been taught to think logically about tough problems. They were all taught in the same way, in the same schools. Compelling logic to one was, therefore, equally compelling to all. This made arriving at a consensus much easier. And change simply cannot be effected
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Liddell Hart

- There must be an institution or mechanism to identify the need for change, to draw up parameters for change and to describe clearly what is to be done and how that differs from what has been done before.
- The educational background of the principal staff and command personalities responsible for change must be sufficiently rigorous, demanding and relevant to bring a common cultural bias to the solution of problems.
- There must be a spokesman for change. The spokesman can be a person, one of the mavericks; an institution such as a staff college; or a staff agency.
- Whoever or whatever it may be, the spokesman must build a consensus that will give the new ideas, and the need to adopt them, a wider audience of converts and believers.
- There must be continuity among the architects of change so that consistency of effort is brought to bear on the process.
- Someone at or near the top of the institution must be willing to hear out arguments for change, agree to the need, embrace the new operational concepts and become at least a supporter, if not a champion, of the cause for change.
- Changes proposed must be subjected to trials. Their relevance must be convincingly demonstrated to a wide audience by experiment and experience, and necessary modifications must be made as a result of such trial outcomes.

This framework is necessary to bring to bear clearly focused intellectual activity in the matter of any change, whether in concepts for fighting, equipment, training or manning the force. Such a framework
was recently institutionalized in the US Army. Let us briefly describe how this came about.

The Army reorganization of 1973 was aimed, in part at least, at the institutional side of the problem we are examining. In these years, the Army needed many changes. Some were purely managerial, reflecting our apprehension of a lot of structure and too little manpower. More importantly, however, the Army realized it needed to change its concepts of warfighting. It addressed the strategic problems of fighting outnumbered and winning, the matter of the operations of larger units, which units perforce would be fewer in number; and the revision of tactics, organizations, equipment and training to bring the Army out of the Vietnam trauma and to make it an effective fighting force in the last quarter of this century.

The Army found itself confronted by principle antagonists, who were almost always sure to outnumber it, and by a growing militarization and modernization of conflict in the Third World. The Soviets, impelled by their obsession with numbers, were obviously in possession of a maturing operational concept embracing mass, momentum and continuous land combat in a nuclear, chemical or conventional environment. Convinced by the realities of our then and impending resource constraints, we could not afford a like concept. We set about to look for ways to win even though fighting outnumbered. This was a crucial first step. (Russell F. Weigley might argue that that was more of a radical departure from our antecedents than others might agree.)

However, some analysts suggested history clearly endorsed the idea, and the 1973 Arab-Israeli War provided a fortuitous field trial of useful concepts. The lessons drawn from this conflict, as well as other analytical study, led to the Army’s conclusion about the requisite strategy, operational concepts, tactics, organizations, equipment and training. The outcome of this intellectual activity and theoretical study was set forth in what became the 1976 edition of Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations. Its primary emphasis, at least as viewed by its critics, was on an operational concept the Army called the “active defense.”

However well or not so well that work may have been done, it met with considerable criticism from within the Army and without. Some of this simply reflected institutional resistance to the notion of change. Some of the criticism, however, reflected unresolved intellectual and theoretical concerns. But the experience dem-
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Guderian

The Corps Battle, the Central Battle, the Integrated Battle, the Extended Battle, and, finally, the AirLand Battle.

One lesson of that experience was that we had imperfectly designed the institutional framework to accomplish change. In 1973, the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) absorbed the old US Army Combat Developments Command. There were several good reasons for that amalgamation—some related to resources and others related to perceived shortcomings with the output of that command. In any event, while strong on equipment development and organizational matters, the new combat developments directorate of the TRADOC staff was weak on conceptual work. Therefore, the bulk of the concept work reflected in the 1976 edition of FM 100-5 was done by a handful of people, none of whom was assigned to the combat development staff at TRADOC Headquarters itself or in the schools.

The realization of this omission in our original concept of how TRADOC was to do its business caused us to create a principal doctrinal development staff element at TRADOC—a deputy chief of staff for doctrine. This officer was responsible for identifying the need for change and for describing the conceptual framework of the change itself. Without that orderly process at the beginning and without one agency directly responsible for it, the need for change would always be ill-defined, and the conceptual direction of change would be cloudy at best.

Now, back to the beginning. The post-1973 reforms were presented to then Chief of Staff of the Army General Creighton W. Abrams. He made many amendments but
supported the general direction of the changes. After Abrams' untimely death in 1974, General Frederick C. Weyand gave his support. That support from the top has continued with both of his successors, General Bernard W. Rogers and General Edward C. Meyer.

The reformers then set about designing tactics, organizations, equipment and training systems to support the new concept. This resulted in, among other things, the division restructuring study and field trials of resulting organizations and tactics at Fort Hood, Texas. Because the concept was not yet mature, and because, in the trials, an attempt was made to measure performance differentials at the margin with an instrumentation system and a test scheme not adequate to that degree of precision, the trial outcomes were much too ambiguous to gain widespread acceptance.

At this point, it was apparent that the reformers had to begin anew. It became apparent that considerable internal consensus building would be necessary as organizational development proceeded. So, for two and one-half years, school commanders, representatives of the Army staff, major command, supporting organizations and other services were gathered at frequent intervals, and what we now know as Division 86 was hammered out at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Consensus building in the Army was difficult for several reasons. In the process of bringing about change, there must first be a conceptual notion of what must be done to fight successfully in the battle environments of today and tomorrow. That conceptual thinking can only result from close, detailed and reflective study of a wide spectrum of technology, threat, history, world setting and trends. That kind of thinking can only be done by imaginative people who have trained themselves or have been trained to think logically about tough problems. That kind of intellectual development is one of the most important functions of our Army school systems, especially at the staff college level.

It is perhaps here that we have not yet fully equipped ourselves with the requisite means to achieve change. The US Army lacked that great strength of the German system—the intellectual prowess and staff brilliance of its general staff officer corps. US Army officers lacked the cultural commonality that was brought to bear through the process of the German General Staff system, and that was the most impressive, if not the most effective, catalyst in making it possible for them to change quickly—even under the pressures of wartime.

Even though our Army has begun working on this dimension of the problem at the US Army Command and General Staff College (USACGSC), in both the long course and the course now styled as CAS (Combined Arms and Services Staff School), several years will be required before the results of this effort bear fruit. The question has been raised as to whether we should consider a second year at Fort Leavenworth for selected officers to learn more about how we should prepare and plan for war and to hone the military judgment necessary to fight and win.

The USACGSC was a two-year course from 1929 to 1938 during which time some of our most brilliant staff officers and commanders in World War II were produced. The need to train more officers more quickly caused us to reduce the course to one year. Since then, subject matter related to fighting has been reduced to fill the many demands of our increasingly complex world environment. The time to logically think through tough military problems and to develop logical thought...
patterns was greatly reduced. But the complexities of war have increased greatly, and it is time to give the matter a new bearing.

While much remains to be done, the US Army does have in place today most of the ingredients which history suggests are necessary to effect orderly change. And we are in the throes of changes produced by that system—changes designed to move us into the last two decades of this century. We would be well served in the future if that process could include more sound thinkers in uniform and fewer academic and amateur military strategic gadflies.

We would be better served as the process matures if we could somehow focus the intellectual prowess of the operations analysis community on our fundamental rather than our peripheral needs. We would be much better served, in the long run, if we could learn how to change our institutions from within instead of creating the circumstances in which change is forced on us by civilian secretaries of war, defense or whatever.

We would be much better served, in the end, if we could develop and refine, in our institution, the cultural communality of intellectual endeavor and the ability to think logically about tough problems. These are necessary to develop new ideas, mature them quickly and chart relevant action programs which effect change in an efficient, orderly way.

In short, we need institutional leadership as well as individual leadership. Without a requisite combination of both, history instructs us that the need for change is difficult to define. What is to be done—the goal set of change—is virtually impossible to circumscribe, and the whole process takes so long that not much ever happens. In today’s and tomorrow’s worlds, we simply cannot afford the luxury of that kind of inefficiency.

The need to change will ever be with us. We may have analyzed the process, framed in its essential parameters, and made some considerable progress toward arming ourselves with systemic mechanisms to permit change to take place. But that in no way ensures either that change will occur or that it will be an easy, orderly process. And so the intellectual search, the exchange of ideas and the conceptual maturation must continue and be ever in motion.

NOTES
2. Capt. Antony T. Ludke. The Dynamics of Doctrine: The Changes in German Tactical Doctrine During the Air War (Montgomery Papers), Number 9, Centre Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kans., July 1981.

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Annex G: Bibliography and Endnotes

Articles:


Books:


Other:

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2 Comments provided by RADM (Ret) David Nichols.

3 FM 6-22, Army Leadership, October 2006. See also Stephen Gerras, Leonard Wong, and Charles Allen, “Organizational Culture: Applying a Hybrid Model to the US Army,” US Army War College, June 2008. Gerras, Wong, and Allen argue that leaders should use a “hybrid” approach to understand US Army culture. This includes using several aspects of different techniques developed by scholars. Specifically, they posit that leaders should consider cultural tension (and paradoxes), the importance of the assumptions that are associated with practices and values, and that both “embedding” and “reinforcing” mechanisms are necessary in the very difficult task of changing and adapting a culture. Finally, the historian Peter H. Wilson outlines that military culture is best defined as a function of a military organization’s mission, its relationship to the state (and other institutions), its relationship to society, and its internal structure. Peter H. Wilson, “Defining Military Culture” The Journal of Military History (January 2008).


5 Schein, Organizational Culture and Leadership, 140.

6 Interestingly, some of Don Snider’s research and interviews conducted in the early 1990s reflect similar complaints as interviews conducted in this study. Compare Snider’s conclusions with the remarks of one participant interview as a part of this study. A participant in a small group sensing session at the US Army War College explicitly asked: “Is the institutional Army at war?” Another student remarked that the disconnect that most concerned him was the gap between many senior leaders and “a major today who has spent his whole career in war.” Interview and small group sensing session with the US Army War College Advanced Strategic Arts Seminar. For example,

7 Snider.

8 Some of those scholars include: Gayle Watkins, John Nagl, Paul Yingling, Lloyd Matthews, Lance Betros, and Matthew Moten.


10 Fred Kagan, Finding the Target.

11 Kagan.

12 Kagan.

13 John Keegan, The Face of Battle. To refer back to Williamson Murray and his discussion of Wehrmacht’s tactical excellence and long duration to develop the culture of auftsgagtaktik, cultural change takes much time and constant attention. Changes in military culture are usually are evolutionary by nature, difficult to control, and require conscious attention.

14 Kagan.

15 See Brian Linn, The Echo of Battle. This assumption may also have diluted soldiers’ identity as warriors, as some leaders declared that the United States would have no “peer competitor” until 2020.

16 USMA White Paper.

The American experience in Somalia between December 1992 and early 1994 might have exposed the folly of assuming dominant battlespace knowledge. Technological sources of intelligence were of little value in Somalia. Commanders relied on human intelligence as the primary source of information. Strategic and operational uncertainties were amplified at the tactical level. Soldiers and Marines operated in a populous, congested urban area in which almost everyone was armed; it was difficult to distinguish between friendly forces, neutrals, and those opposed to the humanitarian effort. For Marines and Soldiers, the complex social, political, and geographical environment blurred distinctions between peacekeeping operations and combat operations. The inherent uncertainties of the Somalia operation were revealed and amplified on October 3, 1993 as U.S. Army Rangers began what they thought would be a mission of short duration to apprehend two of General Aidid’s principal deputies. The interactions that occurred between Somali militia and the Rangers defied situational understanding. NATO’s Kosovo experience in 1999 also demonstrated that the causes of uncertainty in the conduct of war lie mainly outside...
technology’s reach: war’s political nature, its human dimension, its complexity, and interaction with the enemy. NATO enjoyed air supremacy and faced antiquated air defenses. The Serbs had no ability to disrupt NATO communications or information systems. Near-certainty combined with long range precision fires was supposed to vitiate the need for ground forces and make possible a fast, low-cost, low-casualty war. The campaign was supposed to last five days; it lasted eleven weeks and ended after 40,000 aircraft sorties and the threat of a ground invasion. The way in which the war was conducted increased the suffering of both Kosovar Albanians and Serbian civilians and made air power much less effective than it would have been if it had been employed as part of air-land operations. NATO achieved dominance of the air, but that achievement did not translate into dominance on the ground. The absence of a ground force to compel the Serbs to desist from their campaign of terror and to render ineffective the countermeasures taken against air forces allowed Serbia to terrorize the ethnic Albanians and work to turn world public opinion against NATO. The problems experienced during Operation Allied Force were not failures of air power; they were failures based on unrealistic expectations that elevated a military capability to the level of strategy. Once the effects of Operation Allied Force were combined with other elements such as increased diplomatic pressure (especially from Russia), a Kosovo Liberation Army offensive, and the threat of a NATO ground offensive, NATO succeeded and Milosevic acquiesced.

33 See Military review articles between 1996 and 1999. Several dozen articles and book reviews addressed various paradigms, teaching techniques, frameworks, leadership tips, and values.


40 Philipp Rotmann, David Tohn, and Jaron Wharton, p .40

41 See Annex C: US Army Culture: A British Perspective, p. 11

42 Major Paul Herbert, “Deciding What Has to Be Done: General DePuy and the Creation of FM 100-5, Operations,” The Leavenworth Papers (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College, July 1988)


44 Ibid, p. 123


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50 Rotmann, Tohn, and Wharton. p.

51 Participants from USAWC (Advanced Strategic Arts Seminar), Armed Forces Staff College, Sergeants Major Academy, Intermediate Level Education, Captain’s Career Course, 2009.

52 "Review of The New U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual”. Perspectives on Politics. 2008. 6, no. 2: 347-350. Principal criticisms were

53 BG Cardon, Edward C. Deputy Commandant, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC), and Deputy Commanding General, Combined Arms Center (CAC), Fort Leavenworth, KS

54 Rotmann, Tohn, and Wharton. p.


57 Career Course Sensing Sessions

58 Of course, this degree of adaptability brings with it risks. See Sean MacFarland, Michal Shields, and Jeffrey Snow’s “The King and I: The Impending Crisis in Field Artillery’s Ability to Provide Fire Support to Maneuver Commanders.” The answer, again, is establishing balance. Also, a theme to emerge from some of the sensing sessions—most notably the War College Advanced Strategic Arts Seminar—was an emerging attitude that simple because “this is combat” that standard processes (and standards!) no longer apply. Again, the answer is a combination of leadership, training, discipline, and balance.


60 This second point was a major topic of discussion at the ILE sessions. One participant remarked, “the educational process is counter-intellectual. There are no standards.” Another major simply stated that “there is a growing gap between the institution and the operating force caused by the institution’s longer cycle of adaptation.” A third officer in a separate session firmly stated that “the education at CGSC does not change fast enough. Eliminate the 14-week blended course and instead send officers to civilian schools.”

61 Recognizing the Army’s Cultural Changes, Army, Jul 2007 by Cardon, Edward L.


64 Nagl, John A., Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife, p. XV.

65 Cardon

66 Cardon

67 Rotmann, Tohn, and Wharton. p.

68 Casey, Advancing the Army Professional Military Ethic, JFQ issue 54, 3d quarter 2009, p. 15.

69 Ucko, p. 21.

70 Casey, JFQ, p. 14.


72 COIN Manual, p. 7-1.

73 CGSC Sensing Sessions

74 Comments are from the Armed Forces Service College and the ILE Sensing Sessions, respectively.

75 Cardon

76 FM 6-0, Mission Command, August 2003
CGSC and Sergeant’s Major Academy Sensing Sessions

Harris, Brice, American, Technology and Strategic Culture, p. 153.

An example of this outward looking focus is the TRADOC Culture Center located at the U.S. Army Intelligence Center, opened in February 2006, which has been a useful driver of cultural training and education.

This was a widely discussed topic at our sensing sessions at the Captains Career Courses


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