THE DEMOCRATIC ARMY AND THE NATION-STATE

by

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The wounded soldier often perceives the healing process as an eternity that separates him from the unfulfilled aspirations of earlier days. His military unit, his family, his bride-to-be are immediate concerns that lead him to curse his mutilation and the limitations of flesh and bone that heal in their own time. We hasten to put the past behind us, to heal the wounds, and to regain the ground perceived as lost. In our haste to heal, we seldom realize that something *is* lost. There exists great psychological strength in open wounds. The torn flesh of a comrade steels the resolve of the fighter. The smoking hulks and broken bodies of Pearl Harbor once unified our nation. The tortured psyche of the POW strengthened those of us who never experienced his ordeal. Yet, in our unconscious efforts to once again be whole, both the individual and the society follow an unconscious and primitive instinct to hide the wounds that torment our memory and restrict our aspirations.

The uncompromising image of a shattered comrade gives us new strength to come to grips with problems that were earlier perceived to be beyond our endurance, both mentally and physically. Our battle heroes are often anguished survivors who act out the general will. Thus, in our profession, the horror of the recent past often serves as the motive force in the present. Yet all too soon the seared memory is clouded over. The healing process begins, and the wounds are covered; the dead are buried, and the rubble is cleared away. All too often, the motive force is gone before the work is finished, and we resume the pursuit of aspirations that appear to have no end. The healing work of time leaves ashes where hate once burned in an anguished memory of lost love.

We failed in Vietnam, and we do not know why. The wounds that could heal have long since closed. The motive force is gone. Yet our work is not finished. The job is not yet done. Our primitive instinct says, "Don't look back!" But we must look back. We must reopen the past. We must again draw strength from ugly wounds to grapple with grave problems that will not go away.

We lost in Vietnam. That loss will not go away. Our understanding of that loss is the only insurance we have that the mistakes which led to failure will not be made again. We must study and restudy that failure and its causes until we have wrung a full appreciation of our failure from the history of that war. It is my contention that the seeds of failure were rooted in a faulty appreciation of the nature of a democratic army and its relationship to the society.

CHALLENGE AND THE SOCIETY

Every age presents its contemporary societies with a variety of challenges and opportunities, and a society's achievements are directly related to the various challenges and opportunities that confront it. Man's egalitarian idealism demands equality in opportunity, but nature is blind to the demands of man's idealism. Consequently, we find a vast disparity in the opportunities and challenges confronting man's societies in any given age. Each society in each age faces unique opportunities and difficulties. The response of the society determines whether

opportunities shall be wasted or seized upon and whether challenges shall be met. The achievements of a society are largely a measure of the degree of opportunity, as well as of the collective perceptions, creativity, and will of the members of the society.

Society can maximize its achievements by maximizing the creative output and strengthening the resolve of its members. Obviously, many variables impact upon such efforts: The society's goals, cultural level, homogeneity, leadership, and ability to develop consensus are but a few of the many factors that may influence the ultimate response of the society. Suffice it to say that consistent with the goals of the society, a well-developed, unified society maximizes its achievements to the extent that it understands its external and internal environments, while it simultaneously perceives and understands the opportunities and challenges confronting it.

These observations seem evident. Yet, quite often we find ourselves unable to grasp the totality of the requirement placed upon societies to respond to opportunity once we change the focus of the problem from the abstract to the general and from the general to the particular. Consequently, we may find ourselves addressing a fragment of the problem instead of addressing the full range of variables that may be affecting the problem. Such failure usually results not from a capricious or arbitrary decision, but rather from the inability to recognize the problem's breadth.

The identification of national purpose or national goals for our country in any given year is one such problem. Our political leaders must come to grips with this problem as they fashion national policy. Responding effectively to this problem is most difficult inasmuch as it presumes a perfect understanding of opportunities, challenges, and external and internal environments, and it presumes the possibility of generating a consensus among our heterogenous body politic. When we alter the focus of our problem to that of a national strategy for the United States in the year 1980, the question becomes far more complex, involving a wide range of decisions on the allocation of available national resources for the attainment of national goals—goals set by political elites, based upon a complete understanding of the situation of the nation, and consistent with the mandate of the electorate.

Although the problem becomes reduced in scope, it becomes again more complex when we narrow the focus to examine the question of national military strategy. A military strategy enjoying a high probability of contributing effectively to the attainment of national goals is composed of the following components: an agreed national purpose or mandate of the electorate; effective leadership consistent with that mandate; national strategy consistent with the national purpose and specifying political objectives; a military strategic plan oriented upon the objectives of the national strategy; appropriate modern doctrine, training, weapon systems, and associated equipment; and armed forces composed of effective organizations and motivated, capable people. Should one of these components be inadequate or lacking, it is unlikely that the military strategy can be successfully executed. One missing component and we face failure, as our recent experience in Vietnam demonstrates.

The nation cannot forgive failure, nor can it forget. Failure and success are both inseparable parts of the nation's history. They become facets in the total identity of the society. As professional soldiers, our current responsibility concerning our failure in Vietnam is to understand all of its ramifications so that errors of the past are not repeated. Not all nation-states enjoy the opportunity for second chances following failure. While thankful for the continued strength of the nation, we must not presume that the nation could recover from a second loss. Thus, the responsibility of the professional US military takes on an unforgiving cast in the post-Vietnam era that demands an increase in the level of our professionalism. The mastery of that

profession demands a full comprehension of each of the components we have identified as necessary to support an effective military strategy, and it demands an appreciation of their interaction.

NATIONAL PURPOSE AND STRATEGY

The first question of national strategy—"Who am I?"—leads immediately to two others: "Who are we?" and "Where are we going?" These are questions of individual and national identity. For the society to mobilize constructive, collective activity, the individual must be effectively socialized by his society. Moreover, group attitudes must support corporate action to respond to the challenges and opportunities confronting the society in order for the society to generate an effective response. A threshold of unity must be achieved, and the political culture must sustain the corporate action. Thus, the attitudes of the individual and of his society are the bedrock of a successful national response to external and internal challenges. When the attitudes of the collective society form a consensus that supports the attainment of identifiable goals, we can say that a national purpose has been formed.

National purpose is the concrete foundation that supports the strategic house. We hold this statement to be true, not as the result of the mastery of the disciplines of sociology and political science, but rather as the result of exposure to the massive social testing ground of war. We have seen the limits of national authority tested. We have been a party to a military strategy that sought to impose the will of political leaders upon perceived enemies without a mandate from the electorate to support the national strategy. We observed the failure of that strategy. Our observations lead us to an appreciation of the interdependence of effective military strategy and the national purpose. In the formulation of these observations, we have gained an intuitive familiarity with political science and sociology in the marketplace of life. It is an insight produced by exposure to applied science as opposed to abstract science. Nevertheless, the accuracy of our insight appears obvious to those who have experienced combat in the absence of the sustaining support of a national purpose sympathetic to the soldier's toils.

In time of national emergency created by foreign military threats to the nation, the military resources of the nation are expanded through mobilization and conscription. The process of mobilization and conscription stamps an indelible character upon the expanded armed forces, and it may simultaneously pose political threats to society through the awakening of political demands.

In his essay entitled "The People in Arms," Clausewitz suggests the political implications of the mobilization of the citizens' army, citing the objection of the monarchist who considers the citizens' army "a means of revolution, a state of legalized anarchy that is as much of a threat to the social order at home as it is to the enemy."[1] Clausewitz dismissed these objections, observing that mass mobilization of the civilian population (general insurrection) was simply another means of war. Less widely recognized have been the political implications of the mass mobilization of the

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citizens' army as far as their impact upon the character of the military forces is concerned.

Lenin recognized the political implications and the "democratic character" of the mobilized army, the citizen in arms. Lenin wrote that the Soviet Army is "an armed force of workers and peasants" and that it "is not divorced from people, as was the old standing army, but is very closely bound up with the people."[2] Current Soviet doctrine continues to stress the relationship of the Soviet Army to the civil population:

> The unity of the army and the people is expressed in many forms. The people give every assistance to their army in its struggle against enemies, supply it with first-class weapons and equipment, with everything it needs. The army is boundlessly devoted to its people and heroically fights for their freedom and happiness. The army and the people stand ideologically and politically united. This is, in fact, the source of its strength and invincibility.[3]

Within our own Army, we have been less aware of the impact of conscription and mobilization upon the character of the military establishment. Historically, the studies of military professionals and academicians have tended to address officer education and recruitment, technology, fiscal planning, and questions concerning the expansion of the defense structure in time of war as possible solutions to the problem of expanding the capabilities of the military forces in time of emergency. The limitations or restrictions imposed upon our military forces as a result of conscription and mobilization have received little attention by our society.

The relative lack of awareness of the political character of the conscript army, or mobilized citizens' army, on the part of the US military professional presents a striking contrast to the Soviet preoccupation with the political character of the peoples' army. Moreover, when we compare the military forces produced by the two nations in the post-World War II period, it seems ironic that the nation most aware of the implications of the political character of its military forces has enforced rigid political controls resulting in an autocratic army, whereas the US has simultaneously developed and fielded massive democratic armies while failing to recognize in either its policy or strategy the implications and consequences of the political character of the citizen in arms.

The US has normally enjoyed a relative harmony among the goals of the society, the national strategy, political objectives, strategic plans, and the campaigns of the citizens' army. Under Lincoln's astute political leadership, the Union strategy to reunite the nation, the aspirations of the North, and the military campaigns of the Union Army remained generally in balance. Waging a tireless political and military effort, Lincoln succeeded in balancing incentives with debits. The Emancipation Proclamation rekindled the loss of fervor drained away in the losses of the long war, and military victories eventually balanced earlier defeats. Lincoln's ability to sustain national aspirations and suppress defeatist political pressure allowed the Union forces to be sustained until the final victories were secured.

More recently, in World Wars I and II there reigned a harmony between the perceived goals of the nation and the campaigns of the citizen soldier. In Korea, the balance between the goals of the society and the burdens of the citizen soldier were sorely tested. In Vietnam, the balance was shattered. As a result of the earlier tradition of harmonious balance between the goals of the society and strategic military goals, the significance of the political character of the citizens' army was largely obscured. Only when the balance is shattered do the consequences of the lack of harmony between the democratic consensus and the conduct of strategic military operations by the citizens' army become apparent.

THE DEMOCRATIC ARMY

Democratic armies are machines of the national purpose, sustained by a sympathetic

national consensus. Autocratic armies are machines of the autocratic will, sustained by tradition and discipline. The continuum in figure 1 depicts the dependence of the democratic army upon the society to achieve effective order and discipline, whereas the autocratic army achieves discipline through an austere system of severe military justice and strict obedience.[4]

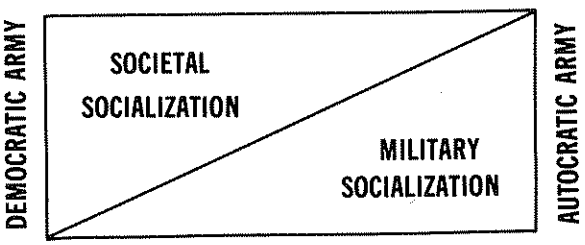

Figure 1. The Continuum of Socialization in Military Organizations

A major difference between the two armies is that the character of democratic armies sets finite limits upon the military strategy of the democratic state. Military operations of a democratic army cannot expect to enjoy success if they are not in consonance with the national purpose and are not supported by national consensus. Society's veto is ultimately exercised to eliminate leadership that directs military operations exceeding the existing mandate or violating the perceived national purpose. And, military operations conducted by democratic armies in violation of the mandate of the electorate are destined to wither and die a slow death as the will of the people works its way upon its leadership and upon the individual soldier.

Once the electorate forms a consensus rejecting strategy or military operations in support of rejected political objectives, the rejection of the people is transmitted to the army, and the army's internal strength is soon destroyed. Heroism for a despicable cause is folly. Once heroism becomes folly, combat operations are futile. Once the soldier's sacrifice can no longer be justified by the needs of the people, it is wrong for the democratic army to continue to wage war. The soldier intuitively recognizes this truism; consequently, closing with the enemy becomes an irrational act, and the army grinds to a halt.

Why do we make the distinction between the democratic army and the autocratic army? We do so to drive home the limitations of the US Army. The democratic army is subject to the national veto, and it is incapable of executing military strategic plans that fail to take into account the threshold of consensus upon which our military operations ultimately rest. Thus, the US Army must clearly perceive the threshold or frontiers of consensus. Within the frontiers of consensus, we can expect to successfully employ military forces in combat if we have done our homework in preparation for war in other respects. Conversely, we must expect that excursions beyond the frontiers of consensus will be crowned with failure, regardless of expenditures or the adequacy of prior preparations.[5]

Since the democratic army serves the national purpose, it is imperative that the implied limitations imposed by national purpose be clearly understood. The US Army must never again attempt to exceed the limits of the national will. Our responsibility is to understand the causal relationship that exists between our Army and the will of the people and to ensure that our political leadership appreciates our limitations. When war threatens or breaks out, the first responsibility of our political leadership is to assess both the political objectives of the national strategy and the existing mandate and to ensure that national strategy conforms to the existing national purpose. If the mandate is uncertain, the President must take his case to the people and attempt to create a new national consensus that responds effectively to the challenge to the nation. The Congress can be expected to support the strategic plans of the chief executive to the extent that they reflect the emerging national consensus.

When is an army a democratic army? There are two tests that indicate whether an army is a democratic army. The tests are highly subjective and the answers arrived at through the tests are never final. The spirit of a democratic army is much like the colors of a brilliant sunset or sunrise, continually

changing and a reflection of external forces beyond the observer's control. Consequently, we can assess the degree to which an army is a democratic army, but it would be wrong to assume that our answer was anything more than a perishable assessment of a continuously evolving environment. As the people change, so will the army change. Consequently, our assessment is like a photograph of the sunrise; at best, it is a correct image of reality only for the moment in which the photograph is made, and even then its accuracy is a function of the position and lens of the observer.

The tests of a democratic army are: (1) Does the army perceive itself to be a democratic army? and (2) Does the army reflect a popular consensus of the people? These tests appear to rule out the army that is the product of a manipulated consensus. Using the above definition, I would classify the US Army of 1977 and the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) of 1949 as democratic armies, and I would classify the Soviet Army of 1977 as an autocratic army. I would classify the Vietnamese conflict as a complex conflict that included in its history a conflict between two democratic armies—those of North Vietnam and the US—the former operating within and the latter operating beyond the frontiers of national consensus. Ultimately, the tests rely upon the perceptions an army holds of itself and the degree to which it reflects the attitudes of society.[6]

There is a tendency for students of strategy to view theoretically attainable strategic alternatives as potential energy, with each strategic alternative existing in a pure state of readiness until called upon to be executed by the political leadership of the nation. That such is not the case is clearly demonstrated by the Vietnamese experience. A period of psychological preparation of the society is required in an autocratic society and a period of consensus formation is necessary in a democratic society before the initiation of any significant strategy involving the citizen soldier. Inasmuch as the period of psychological preparation may be far shorter than the time required for consensus formation, which may in fact never be achieved, the nature of the democratic society places far greater constraints on its leadership and on the range of possible strategic alternatives than does the nature of the autocratic society. Thus, the autocratic state has far greater strategic freedom than does the constitutional democracy.

The failure of writers on modern strategy to recognize the limitations imposed upon the constitutional democracy in the execution of strategy has resulted in unrealistic expectations. The limitations imposed upon the constitutional democracy are created by virtue of the role of the society in executing strategy. Since these writers tend to overlook the fact that society must cooperate in order for any significant military strategy to be executed, some contemporary writers have a naive conception of the possible.

The realistic alternatives and options open to the nation are highly circumscribed by the body politic's needs, demands, and acceptance of strategy. The assumption that the military can execute a plan for the acquisition of a theoretically attainable objective may well prove to be invalid. The scenario of the novel *Seven Days in May* was written under the assumption that the military can execute any plan for the accomplishment of a theoretically attainable objective, a totally false assumption. Since the participation in or support of a coup violates basic values of the US citizen, the US citizen soldier rejects such actions; consequently, a coup appears to be unexecutable in the United States. This is a comforting thought to those of us who share a deep commitment to our democracy; however, we can expect this to remain true only as long as our Army is a true reflection of the people.[7]

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The President is the father figure of the nation. The father who divorces himself from his children robs them of his strength, as well as denying them his example as model and

teacher. The President, as father figure, has a demanding responsibility to the Army when he commits it to combat. He must ensure that he has defined the political objectives to be secured through combat. He must ensure that the political objectives of the national strategy are consistent with the existing national purpose. He must aid in the formation of the new consensus, allowing the individual citizen to understand his own role in responding to the national crisis. He must effectively lead the body politic, aiding the citizen soldier to accept his role in defense of the nation.

Before we continue, perhaps we should question the propriety of our examination of leadership at the national level. Is it presumptuous for soldiers to define standards for effective national leadership? Is the political arena beyond the legitimate boundaries of the US military professional? Are we trespassing in our analysis of leadership? I think not. When the Commander in Chief directs the Army into combat, he assumes a burden of responsibility. If he fails to recognize the scope of those responsibilities, he destroys the Army. The quality of the President's leadership of the armed forces and the responsibility of the President to lead the nation both impact heavily upon the effectiveness of the Army. Moreover, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is responsible to advise the President concerning the vast scope of his responsibilities as they relate to military capabilities.

At the other end of the spectrum is the individual soldier, who looks to the President for leadership. Effective national leadership helps the soldier to accept the daily sacrifice that is an ever-present fact of military service. More importantly, it aids the community in accepting the sacrifice involved in family separations and the increased burdens such separations place upon the community and the fragmented family. This acceptance is the bedrock of the democratic army. Consequently, the military professional has a responsibility to understand the relationship between the effective exercise of the President's responsibilities and the ability of the society to wage war successfully, if for no other reason than to provide balanced and appropriate advice in time of need.

Leadership is to warfare what love is to some marriages. It makes an otherwise intolerable burden appear bearable. Strong leadership can transform an exhausting campaign into a crusade. Successful warfare is sustained by effective leadership. Effective leadership is a product of numerous variables. Studies of leadership seek patterns of leader behavior that maximize the productivity of the group. Such efforts are most useful. Unfortunately, they failed us in the Vietnamese experience for the same reason our perceptions of strategy failed us. The focus of the studies tended to be too narrow. They served us well at the company and platoon levels, but they told us nothing of the character of effective leadership at the national level.

Our discussion of national purpose suggests that the mandate should shape political leadership, which is obviously true. The converse is also true: Political leaders shape their mandates. Persuasive democratic leaders or charismatic leaders influence the attitudes of the people, which in turn contribute to the formation of a changing national consensus. Basically, we see two distinct leadership roles regarding the question of consensus formation. In periods of noncrisis, democratic societies lead their leaders. The mandate of the electorate shapes the leader, since he must conform to the wishes of the electorate in order to be reelected. The passive democratic leader acts in accordance with the mandate of the electorate. Passive leadership predominates until the consensus is destroyed through the emergence of a crisis.

The active leader shapes the mandate. In democratic societies this is achieved by enunciation of the newly emerging consensus created by new demands placed upon the society. The active or wartime leader leads the body politic by enunciating the existing imperatives, making comprehensible the role

of the individual in protecting the interests of the nation. Thus, a major function of active political leadership is one of clarifying the role of the individual. The active leader is successful to the extent that he enunciates the new role of the individual, consistent with the values of the political culture and the demands of the crisis. In so doing, the leader contributes to the formation of a new consensus addressing the existing challenge to the nation.

The role of the US military is one of noninvolvement as the political drama we have just described unfolds. The role of the military professional at the highest levels is to advise the political leadership concerning the capabilities of the military. In the absence of public support for ambitious and far-reaching campaigns, it becomes the duty of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to ensure that the national political leadership appreciates the limitations of the military. The Chairman must clarify the capabilities of the armed forces and resist any strategic plans that are beyond their capabilities. Such a role for the Chairman assumes an appreciation of the electorate as well as an accurate appraisal of the temper of the armed forces.

Soldiers will die for causes but not for options. Listening to some officials during the Vietnamese conflict, one would have thought that options were sufficient. The President failed to take his case to the people. Instead of taking the case for war to the people, the chief executive elected not to work to form a new consensus but gambled instead on a short war fought with a questionable mandate. A national consensus supporting US involvement in a war in Southeast Asia was never established. Political objectives for the Army committed to combat were never established. Although it appeared unclear to many at the time, in retrospect it is obvious that the Army fought for a cause clearly beyond the frontiers of national consensus. Perhaps the single positive contribution of the Vietnam era to our society is that it provides us with a wealth of errors from which we can gain insights into our capabilities and limitations. The increased awareness of our limitations is a rather modest return for 10 years of combat, but it provides us an important, if tragic, lesson that we can ill afford to forget.

The actions taken by national leaders create the environment within which subordinate leaders operate. Leadership tends to be a shared experience as well as a mutually exclusive endeavor. If the President says, "They shall not pass," the subordinate leaders are inspired by his courage, and this inspiration is reflected in their plans and preparations. On the other hand, if the President says nothing, the soldier's girl friend writes and asks, "Why are you in Vietnam?" The soldier in turn asks his commander, who must then attempt to provide a rationale that in order to be fully credible should have come from the chief executive and should have reached the girl friend as well as the soldier long before the soldier arrived in Vietnam. Thus, we live in a world of shared leadership experience. If the President does his job of leading well at the national level, our jobs as subordinate leaders are greatly facilitated.

Leadership is also a mutually exclusive experience, since no two leaders physically lead the same man at the same time. Once the national leader has given his orders, he must then be still and allow his subordinates to carry out his orders. In turn, subordinate leaders must issue instructions and then get out of the way. When the brigade commander issues orders to his brigade, his subordinate leaders listen. He must allow time for subordinate orders to be issued and executed. Since the platoon and squad leaders must eventually execute the order, they need time to organize, issue, and execute the order.

How obvious this appears, yet we saw it violated routinely in Vietnam. In the absence of enunciated national political objectives for the military, it became necessary for the Secretary of Defense to direct the military using crisis management techniques. Consequently, we frequently found ourselves issuing new orders, qualifying orders, or countermanding orders before the soldier could execute the first order. As professional

soldiers who fought in Vietnam, we know well the problems created and the frustration caused by the failure of senior leaders to recognize that the political objectives of national strategy must determine military strategy, that the execution of orders requires time, and that leadership is a mutually exclusive endeavor.

Our critique of national leadership should help to clarify the leadership needs of the military establishment during periods of national emergency. The requirements placed upon the chief executive are demanding. However, they cannot be viewed in isolation. Although the leadership success of the President is a function of his own leadership capability, it also depends upon the quality of the support and advice he has received from his military advisers.

THE MILITARY ADVISER TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The tone of Clausewitz' great contributions to strategic theory is tempered by his profound appreciation of the role of the military professional as servant and adviser to the sovereign. Early in his career, Clausewitz was assigned the duties of tutor to the Crown Prince. The essays Clausewitz produced for the Crown Prince allowed the future sovereign to understand his vital role as leader of the Prussian State, as well as his responsibilities as commander of the Prussian Army. As a result of his duties as adviser to the Prince, Clausewitz developed a sublime appreciation of his own position in society and his responsibilities to the Prince and the State, which superbly equipped him to fulfill his later role as teacher and theoretician of the German Armed Forces.

Clausewitz was able to advise without his ego becoming involved. He maintained his distance. He offered his logic and understanding, fully recognizing the responsibility of the political superior to accept or reject his arguments on the basis of the sovereign's broader political assessment. Moreover, Clausewitz recognized the limitations of political leadership, which caused Clausewitz to further compensate, placing his intellect at the disposal of the sovereign without limitations or reservations. Clausewitz recognized that political objectives are the thread of continuity that alone gives meaning to the chaotic events of war. Consequently, he taught that political decisions must always enhance the conduct of military operations. Recognizing the limitations of practical experience in the personality of the political leader, he wrote:

> Only if statesmen look to certain military moves and actions to produce effects that are foreign to their nature do political decisions influence operations for the worse. In the same way as a man who has not fully mastered a foreign language sometimes fails to express himself correctly, so statesmen often issue orders that defeat the purpose they are meant to serve. Time and again that has happened, which demonstrates that a certain grasp of military affairs is vital for those in charge of general policy.[8]

Clausewitz' politically astute appreciation of the relationship of the military adviser to the sovereign is seldom found in practice. At times the military adviser appears to suffer from ego involvement or excessive ambition, factors which have eventually led to the downfall of such prominent military professionals as General McClellan, Marshal Zhukov, and General MacArthur, to name only a few.

Examples of responsible military advisers in the highly professional tradition established by Clausewitz' mature, self-effacing approach are found surprisingly often in the pages of American military history. General George C. Marshall appears to have attained such professionalism in his relationship with F.D.R. General Grant performed in such a manner for Lincoln. Although seldom called upon to advise, when asked to do so, Grant placed his intellect and his services at the complete disposal of the President. The ability to completely subordinate the will of the military adviser to the needs of political leadership is the essence of military professionalism. In my judgment, the epitome of such professionalism is to be found in the example of General Robert E. Lee's conduct in his relationship with Jefferson Davis.

IN CONCLUSION

In our critique of the democratic army and the nation-state, we have examined several fundamental principles that were violated by our actions during the Vietnamese conflict. Summarizing from our analysis, the military adviser to the President shoulders the responsibility to advise the President concerning the capabilities and limitations of our armed forces. The responsibility of the President is to ensure that a healthy balance exists among national consensus, national strategy, strategic plans, and the operations of our democratic Army. The balance is destroyed when consensus does not underwrite national strategy or when strategic plans and operations exceed the threshold of national consensus. In the absence of adequate public support, the President must work to strengthen the consensus, or he must adjust his political objectives. If he fails to take either action in the absence of public support, he will ultimately destroy our democratic Army.

The President does not stand alone in bearing the burden of responsibility for past failure. Where were the military advisers who understood the limitations of our conscript Army? Our national defense colleges have taught for years that national purpose is the foundation of national strategy, which in turn sets political objectives, which ultimately shape strategic military plans. Yet we fought a war with a democratic Army, with inadequate popular support, and without clearly defined political objectives. Where were the military advisers to the President? Did they have access to the President? Was their advice offered? Why were the fundamentals cast aside? Why was it necessary to fashion crisis management techniques as a substitute for political objectives in our long war in Asia?

Perhaps Clausewitz has the answer. The self-effacing military professional, who seeks no personal gain, who understands his responsibility to the state and the fundamentals of his military trade, advises the chief of state. The military adviser gains the confidence of the chief of state through his technical military proficiency and his ability to rise above personal ambition. Did the conduct of military advisers destroy the confidence of the chief executive? Did our political leadership reject military counsel? If their advice was rejected, why was it rejected? Who owns our failure to understand the limitations of a democratic army? We do not know who must bear the responsibility for failure. We do know the cause of failure, and history will ultimately name its owner.

NOTES

1. Karl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 479.
2. V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 26 (Moscow: Progress, 1964), 103.
3. *Marxism-Leninism on War and Army*, originally published in Moscow by Progress Publishers in 1972, trans. and published under the auspices of the US Air Force (Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 170.
4. This model was provided to the author by LTC Ramon A. Nadal in a statement to explain the reliance of diverse military organizations on socialized versus unsocialized populations to achieve recruitment objectives.
5. Public opinion survey data provide strong support for our thesis concerning the threshold of consensus necessary to support military operations. Survey data reflecting Presidential popularity demonstrated significantly greater approval of wartime national policy during World War II than that maintained in the Korea and Vietnam periods of conflict. See John E. Mueller, *War, Presidents and Public Opinion* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1973), pp. 150, 196-241.
6. The above examples of democratic armies illustrate that autocratic regimes may field democratic armies. Our commitment to the constitutional democracy must not blind us to the fact that autocratic political systems may enjoy political support, particularly during periods of grave threat to the nation-state, allowing the autocracy to field a democratic army in harmony with national strategy, national purpose, and the existing national consensus.
7. Writing upon the subject of peace and war, Alexis de Tocqueville reasoned that democratic armies pose a grave threat to the democratic state. Written shortly after the Napoleonic Wars, de Tocqueville's concerns reflect the liberal reaction to the Napoleonic betrayal of the Revolution in the establishment of the empire and autocratic rule. De Tocqueville's prediction of the threat of the democratic army to the democratic state has not been borne out by the American experience with democratic armies. His analysis appears more appropriate for political cultures having a tradition of autocratic leadership styles predating the establishment of their democratic institutions, and which are faced with grave military threats to the state. See Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 2 (New York: Vintage Books, 1954), pp. 279-85.
8. Clausewitz, p. 608.