Strategy and the Operational Level of War: Part II

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In Part I, in our Spring 1987 issue, Colonel Jablonsky examined the interplay between the operational and strategic levels of war, observing that the strategic is governing because all battlefield endeavor is ultimately subservient to it. He surveyed historical mismatches between strategic ends and operational means, and highlighted the adverse results when operational resourcing falls short.—Editor

In American defense thought, national strategy concerns the coordinated employment of the total national resources to achieve national objectives and is rarely found in a single document. When the focus is narrowed to the security of the nation and these resources are marshaled to satisfy national security interests, the result is national security policy, which has appeared during the Reagan Administration in the form of National Security Decision Directives. It is national security policy that determines national military strategy, the primary concern of the operational commanders, since it involves the "art and science of employing the armed forces of a nation to secure the objectives of national policy by the application of force, or the threat of force."[1]

The commanders in the various theaters of war coordinate with the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff in translating national security policy into national military strategy and strategic military objectives. Based on these objectives and consideration of both the total military capabilities of the nation and the recommendations of the theater commanders, the JCS formulates a strategic concept and allocates resources. For the US operational commander, these deliberate planning steps as well as the accelerated process for time-sensitive operations serve in

peacetime as the best estimate for the deployment of forces allotted to deal with prospective conflicts, the exact nature of which, either regionally or globally, must be assumed.[2]

At the theater of war level, the campaign plan serves as a bridge between the deployment-oriented operations plans that the CINC has developed in response to JCS guidance and the progressive employment of forces over time. By means of this plan and derivative formulations at lower operational echelons, the theater commander and his operational subordinates can communicate their decisions, priorities, intent, and concept concerning the simultaneous and sequential actions necessary to attain the next higher objectives in the operational-strategic chain. In this regard, these subordinates become more operationally and less strategically oriented as they move heirarchically away from the direct interface with the national military strategy.[3] For instance, the commander of a theater of operations or a Joint Task Force will interact primarily with the derivative theater strategy provided in the campaign plan of his overall theater of war commander. In a similar manner, at the next lower echelon, army groups or carrier battle groups in the theater of operations (as well as a ground, sea, or air commander under a JTF headquarters) might design the campaign's major operation for the tactical units to execute.

There is, however, no hard and fast rule concerning operational command echelons. Strategy will determine the military objectives. The nature of those objectives will, in turn, determine the number and formation of forces engaged. In a swiftly moving operation, a JTF commander could receive strategic guidance directly from Washington, as did the United Kingdom Task Force commander from London during the Falkland crisis, leaving the land commander to conduct operations with his brigades and regiments. In a terrorist situation, a CINC might be designated as "supporting commander," while the National Command Authority and JCS interact directly in the operational chain because of the sensitivity of the negotiations and the requirement for speeding interagency coordination and approval.[4] Normally, the larger the scale of the conflict, the higher the echelon interacting either directly or derivatively with the strategic level in order to provide operational direction. In this regard, the variety of operations required of US forces in a global strategy is a useful reminder of

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the important point in the 1986 edition of FM 100-5 that "no particular echelon of command is solely or uniquely concerned with operational art."[5]

Nevertheless, a strategic orientation must exist, however derivatively, if the operational commander is to understand what he is to achieve at his level before he formulates a concept of the campaign and applies his own resources. He will normally receive this orientation by looking for a military outcome at his operational echelon that fits the next higher commander's concept and the intent of the commander two echelons up.[6] This approach to the strategic interface is the basis for defining the operational level of war, since without strategic guidance there would be no operational art. This fact has allowed the authors of the 1986 edition of FM 100-5 to steer a sensible path between futile attempts at airtight definitions and intuitive lunges at vague generalizations. "Operational art," they conclude, "is the employment of military forces to attain *strategic goals* in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations."[7]

Joint and Combined Dimensions

Each US theater of war is different. As a consequence, each CINC receives different strategic guidance since it must always conform with the requirements and restrictions unique to his theater. In all cases, however, there is an iterative interaction not only with the US military and national strategic levels, but also with the leaders and representatives of allies and with the international organizations to which the United States belongs. Such interaction produces successive "solutions" that gradually converge on the optimum.

In theory, political, economic, and other factors should be reconciled at the national level before being distilled into strategic guidance for the CINCs and their subordinate commanders. In practice this is not always the case, and the operational commanders may find themselves with virtually useless campaign plans if they don't help bring about such a reconciliation.[8] This is particularly true in the more immature theaters, where national and military strategies of some of the individual countries are still evolving. The US commander of Southern Command, for instance, goes well beyond traditional military considerations in his interactions with the various US national security agencies as they formulate strategic guidance.[9] And the commander of Central Command has produced a multinational strategy for his area that goes to the political-military heart of campaign planning in a diverse region.[10]

US strategy is one of complex global dimensions designed to achieve national security objectives, the most compelling of which in terms of operational warfighting is to inhibit the expansion of Soviet control and military presence throughout the world. It is a defensive strategy and

therefore reactive in nature. It is also, in an era of resource and strategic lift constraints, one that is heavily committed to coalition warfare and the forward deployment of US forces on a global basis. In order for operational commanders to carry out this strategy effectively, it is generally accepted that they must function in a joint environment. That this fact is recognized is reflected in myriad defense activities currently underway or recently effected, ranging from JCS reform to the joint initiatives instituted by the Chiefs of Staff of the Army and Air Force.

There is also a growing awareness of the strategic imperatives of coalition warfare. They mean, as General Livsey has pointed out, that excepting minor contingencies, "all future US operations will be combined."[11] The combined environment is not a simple one for the operational commander. He must deal with directives from higher authority that normally will lack clarity and firmness, reflecting as they characteristically will the conflicting political, economic, and military situations of each of the allies. In addition, the commander at the operational level will also have to deal with the individual national capabilities, functions, and organizations of each of the armed forces under his command, logistics being a prime example.

There is a compelling need in a combined environment to maintain political cohesion as well as military effectiveness. In this regard, the operational commander may be faced with a situation in which political necessity more than military utility will dominate. Indeed, according to David Eisenhower, such was precisely the situation facing theater commander Dwight Eisenhower during Operation Overlord and the Allied march across Western Europe.[12] In terms of command relationships there is the example of the parallel rather than integrated chains of command involving American, Vietnamese, and Korean forces in Vietnam. Or it may well be, as in the case of Southwest Asia, that lack of access rights and treaties precludes any meaningful forward deployment of headquarters elements, much less actual forces. "There are friends, no allies in CENTCOM," General Kingston has commented in this regard.[13]

And even when forward basing is possible, there may be other constraints such as the concept of forward defense in Europe. That politically motivated, operationally limiting concept has been a part of NATO's strategy of flexible response since that strategy's inception in 1967. As such, it has long been acknowledged by US commanders at the operational level in Europe as a necessary part of the combined landscape in NATO. "But forward defense," one US commander added, "means that you start the forces well forward. It doesn't mean you have to die there."[14]

No better example exists of the vagaries of combined political sensitivities than the furor in recent years over the US Army tactical and operational doctrine of AirLand Battle. Many European allies expressed

concern that the new doctrine might signal attempts at possible shifts in NATO strategy, that the United States was attempting either to establish a conventional deterrent capability independent of nuclear escalation or to create a warfighting capability that included nuclear weapons confined to the European theater. Of special concern, particularly to the West Germans, was any implication of strategic offensive ground operations.[15] In Korea, on the other hand, where the combined strategic-operational interface is equally complex, the reaction to AirLand Battle was extremely positive. How different the reaction continues to be is illustrated by the fact that in allied exercises and war games in Korea, as General Livsey describes it, "the first guy into Pyongyang is a real hero."[16]

The Stages and Spectrum of Conflict

The overall aim of stated US military strategy is deterrence and defense, an aim that adds to the uniqueness of the US commander's operational perspective by causing him to consider his warfighting role in terms of the stages and spectrum of conflict. Deterrence has been associated traditionally with a preconflict stage, a time of peace. Yet US strategy has increasingly brought operational commanders into hostilities at the lower end of the conflict spectrum even while the United States is ostensibly at peace. Global containment of the USSR, for instance, means at least American operational support, if not active operational US troop involvement, against Soviet-inspired insurgencies throughout the Third World.

Further, forward deployment of US forces has brought operational commanders head-to-head with international terrorism, a problem compounded by the presence of dependents accompanying these troops. In previous wars, the civilians that US operational commanders had to take into consideration normally belonged to other nations. Now, as an example, CINCUSAREUR has to deal with a terrorist threat and the fact that 55 percent of his US dependents live on the economy in Europe while 22-23 percent live in government housing *outside* US-controlled *Kasernes*. In terms of mid- and high-intensity conflict, USAREUR forces are certainly in a preconflict stage. But in terms of an organization like the Red Army Faction and the USAREUR counterterrorism campaign underway to protect forward-deployed forces and their dependents, the conflict is real and now.[17]

At the same time the operational commander cannot neglect the so-called "preconflict stage" for mid- to high-intensity hostilities. In this regard, he must be aware of how this area of responsibility fits into US global priorities, and he must be able to help determine when and whether to use various preconflict measures available from the strategic authorities. In terms of deterrence, it is his evaluation that will count heavily as to whether

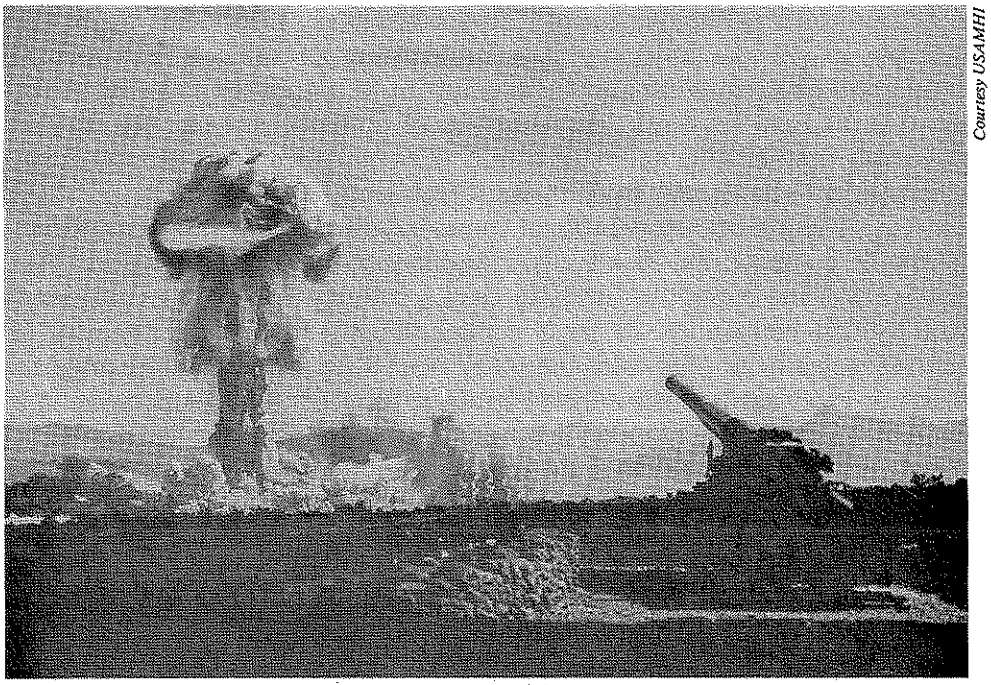
a measure such as deployment of stateside-based reinforcements might not actually trigger the hostilities it is designed to prevent. Noncombatant evacuation operations are another example of an extremely powerful signal demonstrating how preconflict actions involve the tension between what is politically destabilizing and what is militarily enhancing for the operational commander as he interfaces with the strategic level.

The job of the operational commander in the transition to conflict is equally complex. On the defense, the timeliness of the warning will certainly affect the initial size of his force in a period of global instability and strategic lift constraints. If he is commanding a Joint Task Force on a contingency mission, his needs may vary from a supply of accurate maps to a clearer explication of the military strategic concept. If he is operating in a combined environment, the allied mobilization decisions, much less those for actual conflict, may not be immediately forthcoming. And how to reverse the transition process once begun? The Time-Phased Force Deployment Lists of current war plans are but one example of difficulties that may be encountered. These lists represent a series of integrated priorities that are hard to alter, since the process becomes extremely inefficient once change is made.[18] There is more than a passing similarity, in this regard, between these lists and the inexorable railroad timetables used in the mobilizations for World War I.

In terms of actual conflict, the operational commander should recognize that war for a strategically defensive, status quo power like the United States normally represents the collapse of policy, not its continuation, as the most famous, but misunderstood, dictum of Clausewitz appears to maintain.[19] In this context, the commander and his staff may face new national objectives and concomitant military strategic aims as conflict begins. Proper understanding of strategic resources plus the informed flexibility to translate this understanding rapidly into meaningful objectives for operational and tactical elements will be at a premium at the operational level as unexpected aspects of the campaign begin to develop.

New rationales, logic, and aims from the strategic level will continue to be the rule as any conflict progresses. The escalatory goals of both sides in World War I provide just one example. In that case, the underlying rationale of both the Allies and the Central Powers was to justify and compensate for the horrendous casualties of that stalemated conflict.[20] In the Korean War, on the other hand, it was the unexpected successes of the UN forces after the Inchon landing and the subsequent Chinese invasion that caused the war aims to go full circle from the restoration of the *status quo ante bellum* through Western-sponsored reunification and back again to the status quo.[21]

Conflict, in accordance with US strategy, could also include escalation to the nuclear level. In this regard, theater nuclear forces are a legitimate concern of the operational commander. Perceptions of these



Courtesy USAMHI

"Operational commanders must be versed in theater nuclear capabilities." Here, a 280mm nuclear round fired at Frenchman's Flat, Nevada, in 1953.

weapons and their use have varied over the years. President Eisenhower, for instance, was definitely oriented on their operational aspects and for strictly military targets could see "no reason why they shouldn't be used just exactly as you would a bullet or anything else."[22] President Kennedy, on the other hand, believed that "inevitably the use of small nuclear armaments will lead to larger and larger nuclear armaments on both sides, until the worldwide holocaust has begun."[23] The Soviet military tends toward Eisenhower's view. For them, the primary function of their conventional forces "is not to preclude the necessity to resort to nuclear fire but to exploit the operational opportunities afforded by nuclear fire."[24]

US theater nuclear policy follows Kennedy's lead on the risk of vertical escalation. As a consequence, even the lowest-level employment of battlefield nuclear weapons involves strategic, not just operational-level decisions. And even then, as the 1986 edition of FM 100-5 emphasizes, such employment "would be guided more by political and strategic objectives than by the tactical effect a particular authorized employment might produce."[25] All this notwithstanding, operational commanders must be versed in theater nuclear capabilities and aware of the operational implications, opportunities, and liabilities of these weapons. This demands not only a knowledge of the weapons and the nuances of their military use in

any campaign, but the ability to contribute meaningfully as well to the search by the National Command Authority in a given situation for theater nuclear options that are in balance with the political will to use them.[26]

The nuclear aspect is a reminder to the commander at the operational level that he must also be concerned that wartime military strategy goes beyond the scope of military victory. The direct pursuit of such victory in World War II, for instance, caused the United States to subordinate possible postwar advantage to the immediate requirements of military strategy.[27] Conflict termination is thus very much in the domain of the operational commander as he interacts with the strategic level, particularly because the consequences of conflict are so great in an era of nuclear parity.[28] Ideally, he could count on strategic objectives that were valid before and during conflict as the basis for termination. As already discussed, however, strategic objectives are dynamic, not static. Hence, another reason for the operational commander to assess policy changes as conflict proceeds is to ensure that wars do not become designed, in the words of one expert, like "a bridge that spans only half a river,"[29] and that termination can be accomplished in the best strategic interests of the nation at whatever time termination becomes the critical issue.

Based on these assessments, the commander at the operational level keeps termination in the forefront of his thinking as he moves successively through the phases of his campaign or major operation. Whatever the military objectives, he has an important role in recommending and implementing basic termination options. In an era of potential global war, for instance, the operational commander will assuredly be involved in the bargaining in any theater of war or operations to terminate local or regional conflicts. Such bargaining might involve methods ranging from local surrender to coordinated withdrawals.[30] It may well be that communication with the adversary, which is the *sine qua non* for successful termination, is possible only at the operational level. Certainly as the commander moves toward a final operational denouement, he must consider the form of enemy governance in his recommendations to higher authorities concerning termination negotiations. Without such recommendations, the political and military strategists could find themselves in Bismarck's predicament after the French defeat at Sedan in 1870 and the collapse of Louis Napoleon's government. Because of that collapse and the subsequent protracted political turmoil, the Iron Chancellor had no one with whom to negotiate a peace treaty until the birth of the French Third Republic in 1871.

Observations—Strategy, Politics, and Technology

Strategy cannot be considered in its pure form divorced from constraints and restrictions in the international and domestic arenas. The issue for the JCS during the Vietnam War, for instance, was not whether the

political constraints were proper or improper. It was simply the fact that these constraints precluded sensible strategy and made any type of enduring military success improbable. Pure strategy, then, rarely unveils itself from the national level in step-by-step fashion down to the operational-level commanders in the theaters. It is, rather, "a prescription for thought, not policy."[31]

What becomes clear in all this is that the commander's intent, often cited as the indispensable element for success in the operational-tactical interface, is even more important at the highest echelons of the strategic-operational connection. For it is the translation of that intent downward from the National Command Authority that will allow the operational commander to maintain morale and combat *élan* in his forces while accepting restrictions and perhaps more tactical defeats than are operationally necessary because of political considerations at the strategic level. In this regard, no better argument exists for ensuring that the best and the brightest of the US military serve on the staff of the JCS, as well as on those of the unified and combined commands.[32]

It also becomes clear, in this context, that senior military leaders at the strategic and operational levels should be prepared to do more than translate policy into military strategic and operational objectives. As strategic-operational interactions proceed, leaders must also participate in the political decisionmaking process at the national security policy level. It is at that level that breakdowns between national values and strategy must be fixed and national interests that are not served by the strategy be identified. As the Vietnam experience clearly demonstrated, it is not possible to repair strategy in the crucible of operational endeavor. Further, as we recall concerning the German campaigns on the Eastern Front after 1942, operational art can forestall but not prevent the ultimate disaster caused by a flawed strategy.[33]

The importance of interpreting strategic guidance cannot be overstated in an era in which technology has and is transforming the scope and tempo of the operational art. Up through World War II, the limited range of weapons and communications coupled with the relatively low level of mobility of most formations made difficult the conversion of tactical victories into operational and thus strategic successes. Now, however, commanders possess mobility, firepower, and communications that magnify their ability to make this conversion. In some cases at the lower end of the conflict spectrum, the conversion may be even more direct. In counterterrorism operations, for instance, there is currently little room for operational-level considerations after commitment of forces because of the frequent direct link between the strategic authorities and the tactical executors, the criticality of time, and the short duration of the operation. Similar conditions may obtain in time-critical peacetime contingency

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operations. Should the duration and the force size of any of these types of operations increase, however, the employment could take on the more familiar operational aspects of mid-intensity conflicts.

In all of this, technology can be a two-edged sword. From a command-and-control viewpoint at the operational level, for instance, one result of technological change was the "stacked helicopter" syndrome in Vietnam, which sometimes entailed overcontrol and consequent frustration of initiative. On the other hand, the communications revolution has the potential to return some aspects of command and control to the time of Frederick the Great, when politics, strategy, and operational art were all melded at one level in one person. In any event, technology is a dimension of the strategic-operational interface that cannot be ignored, since it affects the entire continuum of war. At the highest level, W. S. Gilbert's picture of a modern major-general who was thoroughly grounded in all scientific knowledge may have been a source of amusement for Victorian audiences. But there is little place in the senior ranks of any armed forces now or in the future for officers who lack the intellectual flexibility to keep abreast of technological changes. This is equally valid at the tactical level. "It is true," General Galvin has written, "that soldiers don't change—but what they have to learn does."[34]

The greatest technological leap, of course, has been in the nuclear realm, a development that complicates the connection between the strategic and operational levels of war. Strategy in the nuclear environment has become more dominant over operational art, because nuclear weapons may achieve strategic results independent of activities at the operational and tactical levels.[35] Further, in terms of theater nuclear forces, the political exigencies of nuclear release decisionmaking override to a great extent the operational imperative for nuclear deployment to help forward defense as well as the strategic need to send a clear but controlled escalatory signal. The complication is compounded in NATO where the relationship of nuclear deterrence to defense sometimes is used to bolster a general aversion to increased spending on conventional requirements. Operational effectiveness

in NATO, the argument often runs, need not be improved since such progress actually diminishes the credibility of nuclear retaliation. The fallacy in such reasoning, as Professor Howard has pointed out, is that societies that are not prepared to support conventional means at the operational level are "even less likely to support a decision to initiate a nuclear exchange from which they will themselves suffer almost inconceivable destruction even if that decision is taken at the lowest possible level of nuclear escalation."[36]

Outside NATO, in minor conflicts, limited-war situations, or even mid-intensity conflicts, the risk of vertical escalation, among other factors, may also preclude the use of theater nuclear forces at the operational level. In this regard, operational art has always recognized that tactical defeats may be acceptable to attain a higher strategic objective. The corps commander in Europe who watches army group air allocation decisions going to another corps is well aware of this fact. What the commander must also realize is that theater nuclear forces have raised the level of acceptable tactical defeat to a point where it has operational implications. There is now the potential that US strategic authorities in a given situation, particularly one without direct superpower confrontation, might accept operational defeat rather than use theater nuclear weapons. In this context, and in others concerning the strategic-operational interface, strategic considerations will make extraordinary demands on the character and ability of operational and tactical commanders as well as on the morale and discipline of their forces, thus reinforcing the need for an overall unity of concept from the highest to the lowest levels of war and for operational commanders whose leadership goes beyond mere technical competence. As Napoleon reminds us, "It was not the legions that crossed the Rubicon, but Caesar."[37]

Observations—The Continuum of War

The nuclear era has also placed a premium on deterrence, a concept that from an operational perspective can be separated from warfighting only artificially. The operational commander can take preconflict measures that not only increase his military capability, but as a consequence of that capability his ability to deter. Ideally, what he achieves would match those cases discussed by Clausewitz in which "results have been produced by the mere possibility of an engagement."[38]

The US Army is in a unique position to produce this important reality at the operational level. To begin with, history has demonstrated repeatedly the overwhelming deterrent value of forces in place on the threatened ground.[39] Secondly, the Army has remained firmly focused on producing balanced, flexible forces in keeping with the nation's global strategy. One result has been the light division, a force uniquely suited to provide swift, on-the-ground deterrence throughout the world—in itself, as

General Wickham has noted, an operational capability.[40] Particular support packages for these divisions would be dependent, of course, on the projected environment and subsequent defense mission should deterrence fail. But even in the high-intensity conflict environment of Europe, the operational commanders on the ground are generally receptive to operational employment of the light divisions.[41] Finally, there is the fact that even if outgunned and outmanned, US forces will deter if quickly deployed to an area with a clear determination for use and for escalation, if necessary.

Should deterrence fail, the army operational commander is also uniquely suited to the role of conflict termination. Ultimately, for such termination to be successful, there must be ground forces on the scene or clearly perceived by the enemy as potentially available. While it is true in this regard that the Pacific conflict in World War II was decided before US troops set foot on the Japanese home islands, it is also true that the war was not finally decided until the ultimate presence there of American ground forces was perceived as inevitable by Tokyo unless the Japanese surrendered.[42]

On a more recent note, US operational commanders will have to come to grips with the current strategy that seeks "the earliest termination of conflict on terms favorable to the United States, our allies, and our national security objectives, while seeking to limit the scope and intensity of the conflict."[43] From an operational perspective, these goals may be mutually exclusive. As the commanders at that level are called on to assess the art of the possible once battle is joined, they may need to play the role of Shakespeare's warrior Hotspur, who saw clearly the gap between military aspirations and implementation. In *Henry IV*, when the Welsh magician Glendower boasts that he "can call forth the spirits from the vasty deep," the cynical Hotspur replies, "So can I. So can any man. But will they come?" Seen in this light, even the Metternichian goal of leaving no side seriously aggrieved or completely satisfied as conflict terminates may be the best the operational commander can possibly attain in his particular theater of war or operations.[44]

A more relevant aspect of the strategic-operational relationship is illustrated by the current emphasis on joint and combined operations. Jointness, in particular, is necessary for the successful conclusion of low- to mid-intensity conflicts, the types most likely to be encountered as a result of US global strategy. In terms of the US Army, this likelihood suggests that a great deal of the educational emphasis concerning operational art might more profitably be shifted from the current focus on large-unit campaigns of World War II to Grenada- or Inchon-type operations where the most common higher operational echelons are land and JTF commanders. This is not to succumb to what Ambassador Robert Komer terms the "likelihood fallacy" of preparing for the most likely contingencies to the detriment of

the most critical ones. It is, instead, a recognition that there needs to be a better balance between the two types.[45]

It is also a recognition, however, that in NATO, the overseas theater most critical for the United States, the battle will essentially be fought at the tactical level. This is because of NATO's deliberately limited war aims that preclude such measures as mining and cross-border operations, that dictate its concept of forward defense, and that limit its available operational assets in anything but a long-war scenario. Within these constraints and restrictions, as well as some purely technical ones, US and other allied commanders at the operational level in Europe are optimizing joint and combined capabilities. At best, however, the result is a limited defensive land campaign that lacks a sense of genuinely extended time and space as well as any immediately available ground reserves to influence the action operationally.

It could not be otherwise. For the strategic goals upon which the campaign is based have been diluted through years of coalition compromise. Limited strategic aims, in this regard, have the same debilitating effect on the operational level as the unlimited aims of Hitler. If NATO truly is to function at the operational level, it must take the advice of Clausewitz to heart. "Even when the only part of war is to maintain the status quo," he wrote, "the fact remains that merely parrying a blow goes against the essential nature of war, which certainly does not consist merely in enduring."[46]

These limited aims explain the European tendency to view AirLand Battle as an attempt to transmute a tactical and operational prescription into strategic imperatives that disregard prevailing political realities—a situation, in other words, not dissimilar to that involving the offensive doctrines of France and Germany before World War I. For the NATO allies, what appeared to be a "bottoms up" reversal of the continuum of war risks "blurring the relationship of the strategic to the operational level."[47]

In actual fact, of course, an offensive doctrine at the operational level is not necessarily inconsistent with an overall policy of strategic defense, as the Israelis have been proving since 1948. Moreover, as a global power, the United States repeatedly emphasized the primacy of strategy, whether unilateral or combined, in defining "victory" or "winning" at the operational and tactical levels anywhere in the world.[48] In this context, the precepts of AirLand Battle take on only general meaning in terms of the prevailing strategic circumstances in each theater. The case has not been helped, however, by the postulation of war widening or horizontally escalating actions that appear to take such precepts, particularly "the initiative," and give them strategic global meaning.[49]

The issue of AirLand Battle is just another reminder that there is rarely anything clearcut in the relationship between the strategic and

operational levels of war. Nevertheless, as has been demonstrated, that relationship must exist if there is to be a continuum of war. It is in the context of this continuum, as General Wickham has pointed out, that young military leaders need to understand operational art in order to have confidence that there is a coherence in the overall scheme from the strategic to the tactical levels.[50] Strategy is the alpha and omega of that coherence. Without it there would be no framework or guidance to prevent the degeneration of conflict to a series of disconnected duels. Without it the commander at the operational level of war is reduced to the situation faced in 1917 by the French general who lamented: "Guns yes, prisoners yes, but all at an outrageous cost and without strategic results."[51]

NOTES

1. *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, JCS Publication 1 (Washington: GPO, 1984), p. 217.
2. Ralph L. Allen, ed., *Campaign Planning 1985-1986* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: US Army War College, 1985), III, 26-27.
3. There is an overlapping aspect that pervades the entire continuum of the levels of war. One author describes tactics moving upward through grand tactics to merge with strategy, which in turn moves up through grand strategy to policy (Henry E. Eccles, *Military Concepts and Philosophy* [New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1965], p. 105). The point is often made that in a large theater of war, the commander is primarily concerned with strategy as tasked by his national or international superiors (Allen, p. 24). This does not mean, however, as one author concluded on the basis of General Eisenhower's World War II experiences, that a theater commander needs only strategic vision, not operational abilities (Mitchell M. Zais, "Strategic Vision and Strength of Will: Imperatives for Theater Command," *Parameters*, 15 [Winter 1985], 61).
4. Interview with Lieutenant General John H. Moellering, 3 February 1985.
5. US Department of the Army, *Operations*, Field Manual 100-5 (Washington: GPO, May 1986), p. 10.
6. This approach, of course, applies also from the tactical to the operational level. A US division commander, for instance, would not dare to penetrate the inner German border if that action were not compatible with the corps commander's concept or within the policy guidance and intent of the NATO Army Group commander (Huba Wass de Czege, cover letter to draft FM 100-5, 1 July 1985, Subject: The Nature and Reasons for Changes in this Edition). COMNORTHAG has also pointed out that an operational commander must not only think two levels up, but two levels down as well (interview with General Sir Martin Farndale, 10 December 1985).
7. Emphasis added. FM 100-5, 1986 edition, p. 10. Definitions have posed a problem in most discussions of the operational art. One member of the National War College faculty has written an invaluable paper that looks at various aspects of this problem. Nevertheless, his definition appears too inflexible and leaves out the key strategic interface: "The operational level of war encompasses the planning, coordination and direction of military activities by a theater commander, a sub-theater commander, independent task force commanders of general or flag rank, or commanders of four-star rank subordinate to a theater commander" (John Alger, "Thoughts Toward a Definition of Joint Operational Art," unpublished paper, [Washington, D.C.: National War College, 5 February 1986], p. 24). Another member of the NWC faculty stated with hardly any indication of tongue in cheek that everything within the Beltway is strategic; everything outside is operational. In a similar manner, another faculty member compared defining operational art to whittling a wheel, which can be accomplished by cutting away everything that doesn't look like a wheel.
8. Interviews with General John A. Wickham, 4 February 1986, and General Fred Mahaffey, 4 November 1985.
9. General John R. Galvin travels 18,000 miles per month to meet with US ambassadors and their country teams in his region as well as with the decisionmakers in Washington, to which he flies at least once a month. Interview with General Galvin, 28 October 1985.
10. Interview with General Robert C. Kingston, 4 November 1985.
11. Interview with General William J. Livsey, 23 November 1985. "There are going to be no great theater staffs in the future," General Eisenhower stated in 1950, "except as there are Allied Staffs" (Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Command in War," address to the National War College, 30 October 1950).

12. David Eisenhower, *Eisenhower at War, 1943-1945* (New York: Random House, 1986).

13. Interview with General Kingston, 4 November 1985.

14. Interview with a general officer. See, however, John J. Mearsheimer, "The Military Reform Movement: A Critical Assessment," *Orbis*, 27 (Summer 1983), 292, who points out that forward defense critics should remember that this is exactly what the Israelis chose for defending the Golan Heights after the 1967 War, specifically rejecting both maneuver-oriented and mobile defense strategies. To trade space for time, in other words, space must not matter.

15. Boyd Sutton, et al., "Strategic and Doctrinal Implications of Deep Attack Concepts for the Defense of Central Europe," *Military Strategy in Transition: Defense and Deterrence in the 1980s*, ed. Keith A. Dunn and William O. Staudenmaier (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: US Army War College, 1984), p. 67.

16. Interview with General Livsey, 23 November 1985. A former commander in Korea described the introduction of AirLand Battle in Korea as an exciting experience that turned the focus away from the FLOT (forward line of own troops) where "we were practicing to be defeated" (interview with General Robert W. Sennewald, 5 November 1985).

17. Interview with General Glenn K. Otis, 11 December 1985.

18. Interview with general officers, Pacific Air Forces, 19 November 1985, and European Command, 13 December 1985.

19. Clausewitz is often quoted (wrongly) as asserting that "war is a continuation of policy by other means." He actually said, however, "that war is simply a continuation of political intercourse with the addition of other means" (Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1976], p. 105).

20. "The war had not been started in order to bring about the triumph of particular views of life and society; but as the cost of operations mounted, these views were felt essential to inflate the prospective profits of victory" (Raymond Aron, *The Century of Total War* [Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1968], p. 28).

21. D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur: Triumph and Disaster 1945-1964* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985), pp. 486-89, 525, 530.

22. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Common Defense* (New York and London: Columbia Univ. Press, 1969), p. 80.

23. John F. Kennedy, *The Strategy of Peace* (New York: Harper, 1960), p. 185.

24. Jeffrey Record, *NATO's Theater Nuclear Force Modernization Program, The Real Issues* (Cambridge, Mass. and Washington, D.C.: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 1981), p. 51.

25. FM 100-5, 1986 edition, p. 3. Compare the change in emphasis from the operational aspect in the 1982 version to that of decisionmaking in the present version.

26. This includes arms control and reduction as well. One example is the critical input by SACEUR and his subordinate commanders to the October 1983 Montebello decision by which NATO defense ministers mandated the withdrawal of 1400 nuclear weapons from NATO's stockpile.

27. The JCS was not asked by President Roosevelt to study the proposal to adopt the objective of unconditional surrender (Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory* [New York: Viking, 1973], p. 32). With the adoption of this objective, as Harry Summers has written, the destruction of the Axis was "no longer a *means* to an *end* so much as an end in itself" (Harry G. Summers, Jr., "War: Deter, Fight, Terminate. The Purpose of War is a Better Peace," *Naval War College Review*, 39 [January-February 1986], 20).

28. Clausewitz would agree. With the probability of war, he noted, "the more imperative the need not to take the first step without considering the last" (Clausewitz, p. 584). At the Army War College, this final stage of conflict is considered very much an operational concern (interview with Major General James E. Thompson, 6 March 1985). In Korea, the CINC's concern with this stage as well as his awareness of key centers of gravity were illustrated by his reaction to a US government agency's simulation in which conflict in Korea was terminated with a large UN thrust well north of the 38th parallel, but with enemy forces near Seoul. For General Livsey such a denouement that left the South Korean capital in jeopardy was unrealistic because it would be unacceptable to the South Koreans (interview with General Livsey, 23 November 1985).

29. Fred C. Iklé, *Every War Must End* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1971, p. 6). Dr. Iklé includes both civilian and military leaders as such possible designers.

30. Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 216-18.

31. Richard K. Betts, "Conventional Strategy, New Critics, Old Choices," *International Security*, 8 (Spring 1983), 149.

32. Interview with Lieutenant General Dale A. Vesser, 3 February 1986. In this regard, General Lawson has been a consistent advocate of placing quality officers in combined headquarters where, he has noted, the United States has given up a significant number of key positions over the last decade (interview with General Richard L. Lawson, USAF, 13 December 1985).

33. David Jablonsky, "Strategy and the Operational Level of War: Part I," *Parameters*, 17 (Spring 1987), 65-76.

34. John R. Galvin, "The Saber and the Computer: Senior Leadership and Military Technological Development," unpublished paper, 11 October 1985, p. 3.

35. David M. Glantz, "The Nature of Soviet Operational Art," *Parameters*, 15 (Spring 1985), 10.

36. Michael Howard, "The Forgotten Dimensions of Strategy," *Foreign Affairs*, 59 (Summer 1979), 983.

37. Quoted by Martin L. van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985), frontispiece.

38. Clausewitz, p. 181.

39. This is not to imply, of course, that in a situation like the Falklands crisis naval or air forces would not have a deterrent value. "As for operations, perhaps the most important lesson of the Falklands War is the critical value of having forces already on station in a crisis area in advance of potential hostilities. The deterrent value of forces on the spot is undeniable." Jeffrey Record, "On the Lessons of Military History," *Military Review*, 65 (August 1985), 34.

40. Interview with General Wickham, 7 October 1985.

41. A former V Corps Commander, for instance, cited areas, such as cities and his corps rear area, where he could use light infantry divisions (interview with Lieutenant General Robert L. Wetzel, 5 December 1985). COMCENTAG stated that he would "take as many as possible." A prime use for such a division would be to free one of his mechanized divisions for CENTAG reserve (interview with General Otis, 11 December 1986).

42. In the Mediterranean during the same war, Malta held out against German and Italian bombing because the presence of ground forces from those nations never reached a state of inevitability. J. C. Wylie, *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1967), p. 80.

43. Caspar W. Weinberger, *Annual Report to the Congress Fiscal Year 1986* (Washington: GPO, 1985), p. 25.

44. Henry A. Kissinger, *A World Restored* (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1957), ch. 8. Interview with Lieutenant General Dale A. Vesser, 3 February 1986.

45. Robert W. Komer, "Future of U.S. Conventional Forces: A Coalition Approach," *Rethinking Defenses and Conventional Forces*, ed. John Glen et al. (Washington, D.C.: Center for National Policy, 1983), p. 45. The sole military establishment in the United Kingdom charged with joint staff training is the National Defense College. That establishment was due to be closed down just as the Falklands crisis occurred. Based on that experience, the British government rescinded the closure order (Valerie Adams, "Logistics Support for the Falklands," *RUSI*, 129 [September 1984], 45). See also Van Creveld (*Command in War*, p. 233), who concludes that in "a world increasingly dominated by weapons too powerful to use large-scale sustained conventional warfare as practiced through the ages appears to be running short of space. It is becoming more and more difficult to imagine future conflicts in which thousands of tanks will slash over hundreds of miles, as Hitler's did in 1941-1942 and Patton's did in 1944."

46. Clausewitz, p. 370.

47. Dieter Brand, "Relations between AirLand Battle Doctrine and Principles for Echelons Above Corps: A German View," *Doctrinal Essays on AirLand Battle and Echelons Above Corps*, ed. Christopher J. Tragakis [Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: USAWC, 1984)], pp. 121-22.

48. For example: "When Army forces are deployed in allied or coalition operations, AirLand Battle doctrine is adaptable to allied political and military guidelines, procedures and operational plans." John O. Marsh, Jr. and John A. Wickham, Jr., *The Posture of the United States Army for Fiscal Year 1987* (Washington: GPO, 1986), p. 15.

49. Betts, "Conventional Strategy, New Critics, Old Choices," p. 157; Interview with General Kingston, 4 November 1985; Wass de Czege, cover letter to draft FM 100-5, p. 4; and Richard Hart Sinnreich, "Strategic Implications of Doctrinal Change: A Case Analysis," in *Military Strategy in Transition: Defense and Deterrence in the 1980s*, p. 54.

50. Interview with General Wickham, 4 February 1986.

51. F. W. von Mellenthin, *Panzer Battles* (New York: Ballantine, 1984), p. 264.