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THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE QUARTERLY PARAMETERS

Contemporary Strategy & Landpower

War Colleges: A Debate

*Richard D. Hooker Jr.
Richard A. Lacquement Jr.*

Afghanistan's Lessons: Part II

*Sten Rynning
Harald Høiback
Rhys Crawley*

Strategic Lieutenants

*Scott A. Silverstone
An Jacobs*



THE US ARMY WAR COLLEGE
QUARTERLY
 PARAMETERS

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From the Editor

The first forum, *War Colleges: A Debate*, for the Winter issue of *Parameters* concerns the effectiveness of America's war colleges. In "Taking the War Colleges from Good to Great," Richard Hooker Jr. argues the country's war colleges do not compare favorably in either rigor, admissions standards, academic programs, or competition to other professional schools. In "Making War Colleges Better," Richard Lacquement Jr. takes the opposite point of view, claiming America's war colleges can always improve, but generally have been quite successful.

Our second forum, *Lessons from Afghanistan: Part II*, features three articles discussing the lessons some of America's allies and coalition partners drew from the campaigns in Afghanistan. Sten Rynning covers "Denmark's Lessons," arguing Danish civil authorities failed to establish an effective bridge to the lessons learned by their military. Harald Høiback addresses "Norway's Lessons," claiming the nation's military forces learned the lessons of counterinsurgency well, indeed. But now they must relearn how to fight conventional wars as they have a legitimate threat to their border. Rhys Crawley considers "Australia's Lessons," urging civilian and military leaders to adopt a whole-of-government approach and to limit reliance on Special Forces soldiers.

The third forum, *Strategic Lieutenants*, examines what several of NATO's military academies are doing to prepare their prospective officers to function in the complex strategic environment of today. Scott Silverstone's "Educating Strategic Leaders at West Point" discusses how the US Military Academy has revamped its curriculum to prepare its cadets for the challenges of contemporary warfare. In "Educating Strategic Lieutenants at Sandhurst," An Jacobs considers how effective the Royal Military Academy has been in delivering lieutenants capable of performing well in complex operational environments and understanding the strategic implications of their decisions. ~AJE

Taking the War Colleges from Good to Great

Richard D. Hooker Jr.

“Our PME systems have to embrace change or risk irrelevance.”

General Martin E. Dempsey

“PME has stagnated, focused more on the accomplishment of mandatory credit at the expense of lethality and ingenuity.”

Secretary James Mattis, *2018 National Defense Strategy*

Scan the literature these days and you will see a welter of commentary about professional military education, most of it focused on the war colleges.¹ The war colleges share many positive virtues and are justly proud of their contributions, but all have areas that can be improved and strengthened. Compared to other professions like law, medicine, and engineering, military professional education lacks the rigor, strict admissions standards, flexible and tailored academic programs, and competition found in the best professional schools. In an increasingly dangerous and complex world, the nation deserves even more from the military leaders our war colleges produce.

The Common Experience

First, it may be useful to describe and understand the war colleges as they are today. Each service has one, and there are two joint war colleges—the National War College and the Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy—grouped under the National Defense University (NDU) in Washington, DC. All have some unique aspects but, in general, the student experience is similar. Each has a 10-month program leading to a master’s degree focused at the strategic level and also confers a joint professional military education (JPME) credential required by law for promotion to general/flag officer rank. Students at the Joint Advanced Warfighting School in Norfolk, Virginia, part of National Defense University, as well as the US Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force students at the NATO Defense College in Rome also receive war college credit. Furthermore, selected officers have opportunities for yearlong war college fellowships at think tanks and prestigious universities.

War college students are typically midgrade officers marked out for promotion from the different services as well as a mix of civilian

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1 The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Dr. Mitchell Zais in preparing this article.

and international students. Seminars are composed of a dozen or so students and are led and supervised by one or more faculty members. The Socratic method is often used to stimulate discussion and inquiry. Students typically undergo a standard core curriculum augmented by a few electives.

Curricula are strong on classical theory and are fundamentally sound, but not always as current as they might be on topics such as space, cyber, or weapons of mass destruction. All war colleges feature graduation rates at nearly 100 percent. Class rankings and academic performance have no impact on future career prospects. Required reading loads and writing requirements are modest compared to leading civilian institutions, and the workday is short, sometimes ending at midday.

War college faculty are a mix of active duty military personnel and civilians hired on fixed contracts, balanced by interagency civilians detailed from the Department of State, intelligence community, and other governmental agencies. Military faculty members serve as “professors of practice,” bringing recent experience from the field or fleet and ideally modeling what students can aspire to be after graduation. They are usually O-6s, which translates to the rank of colonel in the Army, Air Force, and Marines or captain in the Navy and Coast Guard, who are war college graduates. They often lack the academic credentials of their civilian peers, creating a tiered system dominated by civilians, who write most professional military education critiques. Retired military officers (sometimes with a PhD) make up a third, hybrid faculty with a foot in both camps.

War college civilian faculty members are well-paid and enjoy a faculty-student ratio of a single teacher to three-and-a-half-students, ensuring a comfortable workload. Civilian faculty members often stay for many years, and contract renewal rates are high. Compared to faculty at civilian graduate institutions, there may be less gender and ethnic diversity at the war colleges.² Brilliant young academics are rare, and civilian faculty members in their 60s or even 70s are common. Though some are noted scholars, many war college faculty members do little or no research. War colleges are led by active duty general or flag officers, supported by civilian deans who are often retired military officers with doctorates.

A Better Experience?

When compared to top-quality civilian graduate programs, the most striking difference at the war colleges is in rigor. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin E. Dempsey emphasized this point when he rewrote the NDU mission statement in 2011.³ Graduate

2 Joan Johnson-Freese, Ellen Haring, and Marybeth Ulrich, “The Counter-Productive ‘Sea of Sameness’ in PME,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 74 (3rd Quarter 2014): 59.

3 Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), *National Defense University Policy*, Chairman of Instruction (CJCSI) 1801.01C (Washington, DC: JCS, September 2011).

students at top civilian colleges progress through a stressful program with high admissions standards. These programs require lengthy papers; frequent, graded presentations; and heavy reading, and they have demanding professors. In general, the war college experience does not. Students in these civilian programs may be significantly younger than war college students, despite the intensity of the programs and the advanced nature of the material covered. Yet the demands placed on them are significantly more stringent.

The approach found in the best civilian graduate schools is mirrored in the service academies. There the competition for admission is among the most demanding in the nation. Cadets and midshipmen are relentlessly graded and rank ordered to determine their future career fields and assignments. Midterm and final examinations as well as lengthy term papers are standard. By any measure, the service academy experience is demanding and marked by rigorously enforced high standards.

These examples share traits with other institutions such as law, business, and engineering schools that provide professional preparation and accreditation. Their acknowledged excellence in education stems from a number of factors, including ample resources, quality faculty, talented administrators, demanding programs, and supportive alumni. But there are at least two other factors that contribute to their excellence.

First, top academic institutions are invariably marked by competition. Quality institutions compete for students, faculty, and resources—and among themselves for academic ranking. Their students compete ferociously for honors designations and PhD program admissions that will mean much in later years. In all walks of life, fair competition encourages excellence and separates high performers from the mean. Second, academic excellence is rooted in incentives. In programs with real rigor, poor performers are weeded out, while top performers can expect more and better opportunities. Linking future opportunities to present performance is ubiquitous in American society. In PME at the war college level, these attributes are weak or not present.⁴

The lack of competition and incentives in the war colleges is all the more remarkable given the professional environment from which their students are drawn. Military officers live and work in a highly competitive up-or-out professional milieu from the time they enter precommissioning programs. Civilian students from government agencies come from similar organizational cultures. Proven performers are rewarded with promotions, awards, and selection for command. Yet at the war college level, students do not really compete with each other, and the colleges have no need to compete among themselves for graduates or resources. Performance, whether strong or poor, has little or no correlation to future assignments, promotion, or command selection.⁵

4 Christopher J. Lamb and Brittany Porro, "Next Steps for Transforming Education at National Defense University," *Joint Force Quarterly* 76 (1st Quarter 2015): 40–47.

5 Joan Johnson-Freese and Kevin P. Kelley, "Meaningful Metrics for Professional Military Education," *Joint Force Quarterly* 84 (1st Quarter 2017): 65–71.

Contemporary Complications

Defenders of the current system sometimes argue the war colleges are schools of practice—in a sense, trade schools—and thus should not be held to high academic standards.⁶ Through the 1980s, for example, war colleges did not confer academic degrees. Today, however, all students receive an accredited civilian master’s degree. Accordingly, the principles of academic selection, competition, and merit seem just as applicable to senior practitioners of the military profession as they are to the legal, medical, and engineering professions to which the military compares itself. The growing intersection between purely military affairs on the one hand and political economy, technology, international law, and diplomacy on the other suggests the comparison is not spurious and the institutional processes that support excellence in other professional schools should apply equally to the war colleges.

A complicating factor is that the war colleges have little control over admissions. From one point of view, military students are of uniformly high quality in that most will be promoted to colonel or equivalent, and virtually all generals and admirals will come from their ranks. By definition, this represents a significant quality cut. From another point of view, students are selected for attendance by their service or agency without regard for academic qualifications other than a bachelor’s degree, which might vary widely in quality. Most students will not become general or flag officers.

A typical war college seminar may include an air force fighter pilot, a navy submariner, an army tank officer, and a marine infantryman—fields from which the great majority of future general or flag officers will be drawn. But it might also include a personnel officer, nurse, military lawyer, chaplain, and acquisitions officer. These professional backgrounds differ substantially. Academic backgrounds also vary widely, from Ivy League and service academy graduates with master’s degrees already in hand to graduates of third-tier colleges who have not been in a classroom for decades. This wide variety forces the war colleges to teach to a mean that does not challenge top students and militates against order-of-merit rankings, since some students are clearly disadvantaged academically from the outset. In fact, “Students who were unlikely candidates for graduate study in the first place will pass with good grades alongside their more exceptional colleagues, with little distinction between their final records.”⁷ In particular, meeting the aspiration to produce well-educated and capable senior leaders is hindered by the lack of an academic baseline from which to begin.

Another complication is while the war colleges describe themselves as strategy schools, most students will never be strategists. Many are disqualified by their career specialty. Lawyers, medical officers, chaplains, weather officers, personnel officers, and many others who

6 Johnson-Freese and Kelley, “Meaningful Metrics.”

7 Joan Johnson-Freese, “The Reform of Military Education: Twenty-Five Years Later,” *Orbis* 56, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 148.

regularly attend the war colleges will never serve in a strategist position or professionally apply a curriculum heavy on Thucydides, Machiavelli, Jomini, or Clausewitz. Most war college students will not be promoted past the rank of O-6 and have only a few years remaining before retirement. It is certainly true that tactical or operational excellence is probably enough for most officers. But the relative few who will become service chiefs, combatant commanders, or senior strategists (such as two- and three-star directors for strategy, plans, and policy) must operate as true strategists at a very challenging political-military interface. The colonels and one-stars who support them must be strategists as well.

The foregoing suggests multiple tracks offering a more flexible approach are better suited to the existing war college student population and will better serve the interagency and joint warfighting communities.⁸ Student choice, based on background, interests, and future career aspirations also accords better with midcareer adult learning as described in the current literature.⁹

As some have pointed out, comparing war colleges to civilian institutions is not a perfect fit.¹⁰ War colleges have a specific purpose, somewhat different from other graduate institutions, which accounts for their hybrid governance structures among other variations. Nevertheless, they are graduate academic institutions accredited by civilian bodies and organized along traditional academic lines. They award approved civilian graduate degrees, and participate fully in broader academic consortia alongside civilian counterparts. War college faculty members frequently cite civilian institutions as models when arguing for academic tenure and greater control over curricula. Though there are differences, there are many similarities. The contention that the differences should somehow excuse a lack of rigor therefore seems a stretch.

Relatedly, the literature on JPME often makes reference to a supposed anti-intellectual bias on the part of senior military leaders that accounts for the lack of rigor in the war colleges.¹¹ One study of promotion and command selection boards across 13 years even concluded officers with higher cognitive or intellectual abilities were significantly disadvantaged.¹² At the top, officers with superior academic qualifications—such as former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Rear Admiral William James Crowe Jr., former Supreme Allied Commander Admiral James G. Stavridis, former Air Force Vice Chief of Staff General Robert H. Foglesong, former Commander US Central Command General David

8 Patrick M. Cronin, "A Strategic Education: The Ends and Means of the Intellectual Battlespace," *Marine Corps Gazette* 94, no. 6 (June 2010): 10.

9 Michael A. Beiter, "Midlife Adults in Self-Directed Learning: A Heuristic Study in Progress," in *Expanding Horizons in Self-Directed Learning*, ed. Huey B. Long (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1997).

10 George E. Reed, "The Pen and the Sword: Faculty Management Challenges in the Mixed Cultural Environment of a War College," *Joint Force Quarterly* 72 (1st Quarter 2014): 15.

11 Reed, "Pen and the Sword," 15; and Johnson-Freese, Haring, and Ulrich, "Counter-Productive," 148.

12 Everett S. P. Spain, J. D. Mohundro, and Bernard B. Banks, "Intellectual Capital: A Case for Cultural Change," *Parameters* 45, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 83–84.

Petraeus, former National Security Adviser Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft, and former National Security Adviser Lieutenant General H. R. McMaster, all of whom hold PhDs—do exist. Still, it is clear, tactical and operational experience and successful service with higher-level staffs carry far more weight than academic achievement. Officers noted for their intellectual accomplishments, even when accompanied by extensive and successful service in the field or with the fleet, can be suspect if for no other reason than they are outliers from the norm. Though tactical and operational excellence are, and should be, requirements for future success, demonstrated intellectual capacity at the strategic level should also be necessary for our most senior leaders.

Modernizing or transforming JPME is wrenching and hard. Proposals to modernize or transform the war colleges typically excite strong opposition from entrenched faculties. Yet momentum continues to build as the field evolves and as the conduct of war transforms. Ideally, moving from good to great at the war colleges would involve retaining what is best and improving the rest. If so, what can be done to make good institutions even better?

Recommendations

Despite the blunt assessment of PME in the *2018 National Defense Strategy*, our war colleges offer invaluable opportunities to network and learn from peers—a year set aside for reflection, professional development, and personal growth; fundamentally sound core curricula; varied and cutting-edge elective offerings; individual attention from professors and mentors; and superb facilities and campus settings. Every war college also boasts some outstanding teachers and scholars. Unquestionably, the war college year provides valuable learning experiences at an optimum point along the military officer's career timeline. Building on these positive aspects, here are some steps that can take the war colleges to the next level of excellence.

The pool of war college students is a good place to start. Military students are typically selected on the basis of performance as staff officers and commanders, generally without reference to academic preparation. Some have proposed altering the student pool by granting greater admissions control to war college staff and faculty. This would undoubtedly enable a better student baseline, but face opposition from service personnel managers. Noted academics have suggested restricting resident attendance at war colleges to those officers who pass a qualifying examination.¹³ An alternative is a diagnostic examination upon entry to determine placement in different tracks based on prior academic preparation, student interest, and likely future assignments as well as potential for promotion to general/flag officer.

13 Williamson Murray, "Transformation and Professional Military Education: Past as Prologue to the Future," in *National Security Challenges for the Future*, ed. Williamson Murray (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2003), 14–15.

The National Defense University's Joint Education Transformation Initiative, undertaken at Dempsey's behest, attempted to do just that in 2014.¹⁴ Early versions suggested at least three tracks for war college students based on their interests, backgrounds, and potential: a standard war college track, a more challenging graduate program requiring a thesis, and for a select few, an honors or PhD program. But faculty resistance successfully blunted these proposals and NDU war colleges remain, at least for now, substantially unchanged. To achieve real progress in this direction, strong and sustained support not only from the chairman and the Joint Chiefs of Staff but also from the Department of Defense and congressional oversight committees will likely be needed. To quote Robert H. Scales, former commandant of the US Army War College, "Real PME reform can only happen through the blunt instrument of legislative action."¹⁵

Applying some of the same principles that we see in the service academies and civilian graduate programs could also produce more qualified and capable war college graduates. Class rankings that are entered on transcripts and in academic efficiency reports represent a first step in the direction of rigor. Tying war college performance to future selection for assignment, command, and promotion would be an even larger step. Even modest attrition in war college graduate programs would signal greater emphasis on serious preparation for higher-level responsibilities in the military profession. As an approximate benchmark, law school academic attrition rates (defined as disenrollment for not meeting academic standards) averaged 6.46 percent in 2016–17, according to the American Bar Association. Law students, of course, are subjected to stiff admissions requirements. Testing by examination, analogous to the comprehensive examinations required in civilian graduate programs, for admissions, program placement, and graduation would go far to determine the exceptional performers we need to defend the nation going forward. All of these will meet resistance, yet all rest comfortably within the norms of academe.

Every war college faculty boasts some superb professors who would stand out at any institution. But in general, the war colleges are not ranked among the very best for the excellence of their faculties.¹⁶ While most military faculty are O-6s—and war college graduates—almost none will be selected for promotion to general/flag officer. In this sense, the military services are "voting" for less-than-stellar programs by not sending a proportional number of their best to JPME institutions. Military faculty members are overwhelmingly successful, hardworking, and conscientious officers devoted to their work. But their selection as military faculty indicates they are out of the running for advancement.¹⁷

14 Gregg F. Martin and John W. Yaeger, "Break Out: A Plan for Better Equipping the Nation's Future Strategic Leaders," *Joint Force Quarterly* 73 (2nd Quarter 2014): 39–43.

15 Robert H. Scales, "Too Busy to Learn," *Proceedings* 136, no. 2 (February 2010): 5.

16 Johnson-Freese, Haring, and Ulrich, "Counter-Productive," 145–46.

17 Murray, "Transformation," 12.

Though this has been the norm for many years, at one time our staff and war college faculties provided the seed for the most senior ranks. During World War II, for example, 31 of the 35 most successful corps commanders had previously taught in a service school.¹⁸ If JPME is as important as we believe, a move in this direction would send a strong signal.

For their part, while some civilian war college professors enjoy national reputations in their fields, most do not, and others actively eschew scholarship as a distraction from the teaching mission. This dilemma deserves a more in-depth discussion. The war colleges typically offer attractive six-figure salaries compared to a national average of \$64,000 for other full-time social science faculty with comfortable workloads. Furthermore, NDU has de facto tenure with a 90 percent contract renewal rate compared to 24 percent of civilian faculty who were tenured in 2003.¹⁹ Opportunities to conduct research are ample. Classroom sizes are small and administrative requirements, despite occasional grumbling, are less than those at counterpart civilian institutions. What then is the problem?

The answer is probably that the academic aspirations and reputations of the war colleges are somewhat lower than leading civilian graduate schools, and the very best academic talent is therefore not drawn to them.²⁰ War colleges modeled on top graduate schools would probably draw top academic talent. An infusion of younger and midcareer academic talent, to complement experienced military and civilian practitioners would bring innovation and fresh insights to war college faculties that could use them. But first, academic standards should be raised to approximate the best professional institutions. This would likely attract top faculty.

One further point may warrant discussion. The Socratic method described above has become an article of faith at all war colleges, and it has much to offer. What it does not do particularly well is require emerging senior leaders to address and solve complex problems under pressure. The importance of this trait for senior leaders was communicated to Congress in 2010 in the regard that some commanders “consider[ed] their staff officers lacking in certain critical abilities necessary to perform their jobs effectively.”²¹

Solving complex problems was once the hallmark of the American JPME system, nowhere more so than the US Naval War College before World War II. There the faculty and student body worked out most

18 Scales, “Too Busy to Learn,” 2; and David W. Barno et al., *Building Better Generals* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 2013), 21.

19 US Department of Labor, 2017; Mark Purcell, “‘Skilled, Cheap, and Desperate’: Non-Tenure-Track Faculty and the Delusion of Meritocracy,” *Antipode* 39, no. 1 (2007): 121–43; Robin Wilson, “Tenure, RIP: What the Vanishing Status Means for the Future of Education,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 4, 2010; and American Association of University Professors, 2016.

20 Reed, “Pen and Sword,” 16.

21 Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, *Another Crossroads? Professional Military Education Two Decades after the Goldwater-Nichols Act and the Skelton Panel* (Washington, DC: House Committee on Armed Services, April 2010), xiv.

of the technical and doctrinal innovations that led to victory in the Pacific Ocean.²² War college commandants and deans must continue to strengthen the simulation, war gaming, and exercise components of their curricula accordingly, with special emphasis on individual assessment by senior mentors. Done correctly, this approach could complement the seminar environment nicely.

Concluding Thoughts

The intent here is to provide a friendly critique of our war colleges, which are national treasures with much to be proud of. Even so, national security is a harsh business. Virtually every major military decision in time of war will be made by a war college graduate. The quality of those decisions will be measured by victory or defeat and by dead and wounded. In few other professions, perhaps none, is the need for highly skilled practitioners so clear. If so, the standards for graduation from our most senior military schools should be demanding and exacting. If the profession of arms is a true profession, then it should approach its professional education, certification, and credentialing accordingly.

This logic argues against an industrial age, one-size-fits-all war college where every student follows the same track to guaranteed success. One need only read the memoirs of former general and later President Dwight D. Eisenhower and other military giants of his generation to see how exclusive our staff and war colleges used to be, how intense the competition was, and how useful these experiences were to their future success. They were laboratories for world war, and because of them, despite the military poverty and scant resources that existed in the interwar period, the United States was able to field a cohort of extraordinary senior military leaders that enabled victory.

In closing, the following comment from a respected scholar with serious credentials in both JPME and civilian settings puts it well:

Actually . . . I wouldn't choose between the two at all—I'd build an institution that combines the best attributes of both. I'd pull together the selfless loyalty, discipline, devotion to service, and teamwork of PME along with the academic freedom, rigor, respect for scholarship, and job security of civilian academe. Then I'd recruit the best military and civilian faculty and students I could find to run and participate in it.²³

As our security environment increases in complexity, the best possible investment we can make is in leader development. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has made this clear. The war colleges today provide a valuable and important service to the nation. They are ideal platforms to take senior-leader development to the next level. These suggestions hopefully contribute to that end.

²² Murray, "Transformation," 4.

²³ Audrey Kurth Cronin, "National Security Education: A User's Manual," War on the Rocks, June 17, 2014.

Making the War Colleges Better

Richard A. Lacquement Jr.

No surprise. I am a big fan of war colleges . . . particularly the US Army War College (USAWC). The United States needs war colleges, all six and then some, to develop national security—especially military—expertise to serve US interests and values. All the war colleges are joint. But to the extent they differ, each has a comparative advantage our joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational endeavors need.

More precisely, the separate war colleges represent specialized Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, economic, and national policy expertise while promulgating common joint elements. In typical US military manner, this joint-but-not-unified approach to senior-service war college education leads to healthy competition. In some regards, such an approach is not efficient (like jointness itself). But effectiveness is the more important standard for analyzing war colleges.

War colleges make exceptional contributions to American national security through the leaders and ideas they produce. We should strengthen war colleges' effectiveness through improvements to faculty, curriculum, and outreach. We must pursue improvements to the broader framework of talent management affecting how we select and prepare faculty and students as well as managing how faculty members and graduates subsequently serve society. My aspiration is that dialogue will advance war college endeavors, with close attention to the dynamic international security environment.

This article has three main components. The first lays out the argument for war colleges, emphasizing answers developed at the USAWC regarding what we think it takes to effectively meet American society's security needs. The second picks up the challenge from Hooker about "Taking the War Colleges from Good to Great," a useful, somewhat incomplete, and sometimes off-the-mark contribution in which I find more to laud than criticize. The third and final section offers additional recommendations toward making war colleges better.

Mission and Structure: The Why and How of War Colleges

Let us put the war colleges in context before focusing on how to improve them. The mission of war colleges is to educate and develop senior leaders for service in high-level national security assignments. War colleges are professional schools situated within an extensive ecosystem of professional military education (PME). Each was created by one of

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the US government's military departments to meet vital professional needs, and they are funded and staffed for parochial but society-focused reasons.

The Navy Department established the Naval War College in 1884. The War Department established the USAWC in 1901, and the Industrial College of the Army Forces—now the Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy—in 1924. General Eisenhower, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, established the National War College in 1946. The War Department established the Air War College in 1946, and the Marine Corps established Marine Corps University in 1991. Their missions, as with their parent organizations, aim to serve the American people—their ultimate clients.

These six war colleges are not the only source for senior-level military education. There are a handful of smaller programs that provide joint senior-level education required for promotion to US military general/flag officer ranks. The US Army also has a program for selected officers to participate in fellowships for senior education that do not result in joint professional military education (JPME) credit. To be eligible for promotion to general/flag officer, USAWC Fellows must attain JPME II credentials, most commonly through a 10-week program at the Joint Forces Staff College.

Unlike most civilian academic institutions, war colleges are not structured to compete for students and measure value in an open employment market. Rather than enticing students to choose a school to develop skills for future employment, war colleges start with students who are already established professionals within the organizations that fund and populate the schools. As such, the students are not the clients. Rather, the students embody the expert talent PME programs further develop to meet the needs of society—the true client.

War college personnel, facilities, and other resources come primarily from tax dollars via the Department of Defense (DoD) budget. Consequently, war colleges are guided by professional obligations to society's national security needs rather than the needs of individual students or other market or business demands. This is a significant point in that it affects almost everything about the manner in which policies govern faculty, students, and curricula.

War colleges focus on the expert knowledge professionals require for established military jurisdictions of practice—such as war, deterrence, stability operations, and support to civil authorities, among others—and adjudicate new jurisdictions such as cyber and space. Academic rigor promulgates professional expertise. But the programs are not primarily academic. With a step or two of logic, however, we may confidently state students attend war college due to our society's national security requirements.

Befitting professional schools, faculty predominantly come from national security community backgrounds. Faculties include active and retired military and civilian national security professionals and are

supplemented by civilians with academic credentials in related fields of study, such as political science, especially the subfields of security studies, foreign policy, American politics, and regional studies; history, especially military; psychology, especially leadership; and business management, especially resource and human capital management.

The preponderance of students are senior-level military officers—primarily grades O-5 and O-6. War colleges include similarly high-ranking military officers from allied or partner nations, and senior civilians from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and other organizations in the Department of Defense. Other national security professionals from non-DoD executive departments, most prominently the Department of State, intelligence community, and Department of Homeland Security, also attend. The US, allied, or partner-nation governments pay for their senior professionals to attend war colleges. Students do not pay tuition to attend. To the degree students incur a personal cost, it is commonly in terms of additional time they must serve their organizations subsequent to attendance. In the Army, for example, this amounts to an additional year of active-duty service obligation.

Student selection, which is typically competitive, is primarily a function of each organizations' personnel systems and policies. In the competitive up-or-out world of US Army officers, thousands of officers are assessed as lieutenants. About 16 years later, less than 15 percent are competitively selected for promotion to lieutenant colonel (O-5), the most junior rank at which an officer may be competitively selected for war college attendance. By about 22 years, less than five percent of that initial cohort earn promotion to colonel (O-6).

The war colleges have a dual nature. They produce both leaders and ideas. War colleges do not promulgate a fixed, unchanging body of knowledge merely to be mastered and applied. Yes, there are many lessons, insights, frameworks, rules, theories, doctrine, and readily applicable techniques that guide war college graduates' discretionary judgment. But no, war colleges have not solved national security equations once and for all. Moreover, the equations themselves shift as some variables decline in significance, although very few disappear completely, and new variables emerge. The vast number of variables relevant to professional judgment create a premium for generalists to serve at the apex of their professions without discounting essential contributions of specialization among and within organizations.

The priority of the three important factors contributing to the mission of war colleges is faculty, curriculum, and then outreach. But all three are indispensable to success and none can be neglected. The faculty is the center of gravity for understanding the needs of the national security profession, identifying and developing appropriate expertise, and promulgating this expertise through the education and development of future leaders. The faculty and staff work closely with stakeholders who represent society, primarily within the executive and legislative branches of government but also at the state level.

The curriculum represents the body of expert knowledge that rising national security professionals must master to meet their responsibilities to society. The curriculum is a living body of expertise. Faculty and students have a responsibility to learn and master that expertise and challenge, research, and innovate to ensure expertise remains relevant to society's interests and values within a dynamic security environment.

The third is outreach. Students and faculty must stay connected with those they serve. It is important for war college students, staff, and faculty to understand the strategic environment and its challenges. Faculty and students engage in outreach to provide insights, perspectives, and recommendations to shape policy and strategy.

The war colleges are not the only institutions that provide national security education. Within the Department of Defense, the Naval Post-graduate School, the Air Force Institute of Technology, and some other DoD education and development institutions also provide joint education at the senior level. But no major counterpart to DoD education and development exists elsewhere in the executive branch. The State Department, for example, has some educational programs for midcareer professionals but nothing as extensive as JPME.

The civilian academic community also has an array of academic programs that provide education, and some development, relevant to the national security establishment. Public policy programs and business schools may address academic topics relevant to national security professionals. But these programs are not sufficient for society's national security needs.

High-quality public policy schools, such as Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, offer wonderful graduate programs that predominantly support the development and certification of junior students who aspire to become professionals in the public service realm, including the national security community. Business schools, such as the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management, provide valuable complementary programs that deal with large enterprises in the market-driven economy. Yet both public policy and business schools typically cater to individual student customers.

The Challenge: "Taking the War Colleges from Good to Great"

Hooker's welcome addition to the literature is a praiseworthy, thoughtful analysis. I strongly agree with the overall theme and the spirit behind Hooker's recommendations to make war colleges better. Furthermore, the categories he concentrates on—students, faculty, and curriculum—are important. I also agree the focus must be on what the nation and its taxpayers deserve.

The author provides helpful suggestions—greater attention to war college faculty assignments and composition; strengthening faculty teaching, scholarship, and service; greater attentiveness to student selection; better tailoring war college opportunities to accord with

student and organizational demands; and continued attention to war college curricular rigor and scope, including how to keep pace with key contemporary challenges. I also endorse Hooker's implicit point that academic and professional standards are complementary. On the other hand, I find his focus on academic rather than professional standards unbalanced.

My strongest critique is that Hooker introduces major distortions by emphasizing academic over professional standards. Academic and professional standards are not mutually exclusive. But the distinction is important. Part of the problem is Hooker unduly focuses on unspecified civilian academic programs as the primary comparison for war colleges. Generally he tends to focus on the master's degrees war colleges award in drawing comparisons to civilian programs.

This comparison between civilian and military education is inapt for two main reasons. First, even when comparing war college curricula with other civilian professional programs such as business, law, medicine, and public policy, a salient difference exists in the nature of the body of knowledge such programs impart to their professionals. Most professional schools focus on a well-defined, specialized body of knowledge within which the judgment of professionals is delimited—medical professionals and health, legal professionals and law, business professionals and profits. Such programs focus on specialization.

For the military, the development of senior professionals focuses on a broader and more general body of knowledge encompassing a wide array of human dynamics and fundamental threats to life and security in a context of actual or potential violence. The closest parallel to war colleges may be public policy schools that weave interdisciplinary economics, governance, and politics. These may have been the schools Hooker had in mind—but he should be specific. Military services have long included such schools as part of professional development pathways. I graduated from one myself, and I know many other war college faculty members—civilian and military—who are products of such programs.

Second, with few exceptions, civilian graduate programs are designed for students seeking basic professional qualifications (law school as a means to practice law, medical schools as the means to practice medicine). The same is generally true of business and public policy schools where the preponderance of students are in the entry or early stages of professional careers, and these schools serve as venues to develop basic expertise for careers of practice. Nevertheless, there is sometimes a parallel between war colleges and business or public policy schools when the latter provide programs for midcareer professionals. A more appropriate comparison is likely that of war college graduation rates and retention with such midcareer master's programs rather than with either undergraduate- or entry- level professional graduate schooling.

Several points in the article beg for correction or clarification.

Among the minor points in need of correction or elaboration are assertions about jointness, program length, competitive selection,

academic standards, elective choices, the value of war college experience to future student and faculty assignments, and one-size-fits-all characterizations.

To start with, all war colleges are joint—not just National and Eisenhower. For the services, JPME credit may not be the predominant focus, but it is a statutory requirement as it is for National Defense University programs. Hooker also only references the 10-month programs common to resident education across war colleges and fails to recognize the nature, structure, and contributions of distance programs, such as those at the Naval War College, Air War College, Joint Forces Staff College, and the Army War College that support a substantial population of reserve component students associated with the federal reserves and National Guard. Furthermore, although not necessarily available to all distance students, a substantial subset of students in the Army War College's 2-year distance education program also earn JPME II qualifications and a master's degree—just like students in the resident program.

The assertion students do not compete for admission to war colleges is only partly accurate. True, there are no individual application requirements similar to military service academies or typical civilian undergraduate and graduate programs. Conceptually, such programs differ from war colleges as gatekeepers to particular professions. In contrast, war colleges focus on developing and educating seasoned professionals for additional responsibilities. The dominance of professional, organizational imperatives in the war colleges' missions have few parallels to civilian programs.

As noted earlier, in a broader context, war college students do compete for attendance. The competition for war college student selection is institutional. The services typically compare performance and potential across officers' entire careers when deciding who to select for war college attendance. For the Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps, the selection is centralized. For all students, selection for attendance is made by organizations or countries to which student quotas have been allocated. Prerequisites of rank (O-5 or O-6) and the possession of a bachelor's degree mark a high baseline for the quality of the student body.

I find the assertion about war colleges not meeting academic standards puzzling. As Hooker points out, the master's degrees war colleges award are accredited by the same regional accreditation bodies as civilian graduate schools. Further, all war colleges must continue to meet civilian graduate degree standards to retain accreditation, just as the USAWC did in 2019 to fulfill the Middle States Commission on Higher Education requirements for eight more years of accreditation.

The claim war colleges fail to accommodate student choice also seems off the mark. True, the interests of the organizations selecting midcareer professionals for war college attendance dominate. And selections are governed by a quota, particularly among the military

services, to ensure all war college student bodies have an appropriately joint, interagency, and multinational character. But for many individuals, personal preference is a major factor. Talent management opportunities include the choice of which war college an individual attends.

Once students arrive at a war college, they have many other choices. And each war college has dynamics to reconcile such student choice with institutional requirements. All offer elective courses as part of their educational programs. At the USAWC, in addition to electives, there are several special programs subject to competitive selection in which more than a quarter of students participate. Although the core curriculum demands the majority of students' time, we have found several ways to tailor each educational experience. We intend to expand such opportunities in coming years.

Major offerings include the Carlisle Scholars Program (defense research and writing); the Advanced Strategic Art Program (national-level military policy, strategy, and campaigning); the National Security Policy Program (the nexus of national security policy and strategy development); the Advanced Defense Management Program (DoD resources management); the Joint Land Air Sea Space exercise (JLASS-EX) that culminates with a war game involving students from several war colleges; the Futures seminar that supports the Army's deep futures wargame (Unified Quest); and the Eisenhower Series College Program (an array of high-quality national security engagements around the country).

I disagree with Hooker's assertion that student performance at a war college does not matter. Nevertheless, I am aware of the broader conventional wisdom that a competitive selection to war college is more important than attendance itself. But I do not think conventional wisdom holds up across the board. Related to this, the claim that class rankings are not used on transcripts and evaluation reports is not true for all war colleges.

At the USAWC, class ranking has been part of both the resident and distance programs since 2013. Our current system, aligned with recent changes to the Army's official academic evaluation report, identifies the distinguished graduates—the top 10 percent—and superior graduates—the next highest 20 percent of the class. The academic evaluation report is the official rating entered into an Army officer's personnel file upon completion of a major academic program. The new version of the form for USAWC attendees includes a section that requires a rank-ordered forced distribution designation (distinguished graduate, superior graduate, graduate) in a very similar fashion to the forced distribution selections on an Army officer evaluation report. The Naval War College has also identified class ranking—the top 5 percent graduate with highest distinction and the next 15 percent with distinction.

The claim that war college performance has no impact on an individual's future career is hard to confirm. As one input among many in a typical individual's career file, I suspect the real answer is

idiosyncratic by organization. My observation of student interest and attention to overall war college academic distinction and other honors, writing awards for example, suggests students themselves often perceive such distinctions as valuable for enhancing their career prospects.

The Army academic evaluation report, in addition to noting distinguished and superior performance, allows recognition of focused work in areas of concentration, such as regional studies and special programs, and provides space for narrative comments on awards and other accomplishments. What difference do such items make to boards and assignment officers? I have plenty of anecdotal evidence such information has been perceived as important. I can attest to efforts at the USAWC that have influenced officer assignments (most often for US Army officers) based on student performance at the college. Establishing better fidelity appears to require further study. But a blanket dismissal strikes me as off the mark.

Regarding faculty, Hooker makes a statement I have heard often that may capture a partial truth. He cites evidence that “almost [no faculty] will be selected for promotion” and asserts services do not value war colleges. Again, lore and conventional wisdom, whatever the original source, may capture some truth. But this is a question that begs for a baseline. Let us start with the obvious fact many war college military and civilian faculty are already senior leaders. Colonels and Navy captains (O-6s) are senior ranks. Many State Department faculty hold one- and two-star equivalent ranks of counselor or minister counselor. Active and retired members of the senior executive service—general/flag officer equivalents—are also well-represented among war college faculty. Turning to nongovernment civilian faculty, war college faculty exhibit profiles of rather remarkable senior professionals.

As to the matter of promotion after a faculty assignment, I believe more research might be in order. What number would constitute more than “almost none”? I have personal experience within the past eight years with five US Army general officers who served as war college faculty (Lieutenant General Joseph Anderson and Brigadier General Patrick J. Donahoe at the Naval War College as well as Brigadier General Brian Cashman, Brigadier General Susie S. Kuilan, and Major General Gregg F. Martin at the Army War College).

Nevertheless, I agree with the more general point that service on a war college faculty should be more career enhancing. Services would do well to think of war college faculty as a “second graduating class” deserving greater consideration for future promotion and assignments. This approach would be in line with how duty as a service academy instructor can have beneficial results and in line with positive examples of general/flag officers in World War II who had faculty experience before that war.

Regarding the national standing of civilian war college professors, I again challenge Hooker to be more rigorous. My anecdotal evidence suggests very impressive junior scholars exist across the PME enterprise.

Of course, given war colleges are primarily schools of professional education and practice, dismissing senior practical experience of both civilian and uniformed faculty seems inappropriate. Many civilian faculty are widely respected in senior government circles—the primary audience for the war colleges' graduates and ideas.

The “industrial age, one-size-fits-all” critique appears to be a strawman that falls apart with just a quick glance across the literature Hooker cites, and a brief read into each of the war college's programs. The six war colleges are certainly not cookie cutter replicas of each other, and they do not all follow the same developmental models. As pointed out earlier, they represent many healthy competitive features of jointness itself.

I have visited, attended, or studied several civilian public policy programs—the closest civilian counterparts to war colleges—and the war colleges compare favorably. Both sets of programs are very much of the current age and confront the challenges of information, of technology, and of intertwined, interdisciplinary subjects that make war and other major governance issues such wicked problems. Maybe it is just me, but the industrial age metaphor does not resonate.

I found another minor point confusing if not inaccurate: one of the first endnotes states, “Civilian faculty members write most PME critiques.” My quick tally of sources cited by Hooker in the body and notes of the article yields a heavy majority of individuals I would categorize as military or military faculty, including epigraphs at the start of the article from retired Army General Martin Dempsey and retired Marine Corps General James Mattis. Personally, I find it appropriate and healthy that military professionals are active in critiquing and challenging professional military education.

Some other minor points beg for clarity. I concur with Hooker's call to consider better ways to build experiential learning such as increased simulation, war gaming, and exercises into war college curriculum. But he does so without evidence or baseline as to what is already happening. I am familiar with evidence, especially at the USAWC, that reflects increased experiential learning through staff rides, war games, simulations, case studies, exercises, and a variety of roll-playing activities. I have heard and read passionate pleas for greater attention to certain techniques—such as the use of board games, strategy exercises, and decision-forcing case studies—that helpfully contribute to debates over how to invest our students' educational time. But the debate is a broader one that constantly seeks to balance myriad techniques—some as ancient, yet still as relevant, as Socratic dialogue.

Many foregoing points are directed at assumptions, assertions, or conventional wisdom that have questionable validity. I challenge them. But I do not dismiss them. Hooker raises important questions worthy of additional research and comparison across the war colleges. Overall, Hooker deploys the points in the service of worthy recommendations to

strengthen the quality of war college faculty, students, and curriculum—objectives for which I count myself an ally.

Assessing the Situation: What Needs to Change?

As with any profession, expertise and practice must evolve as society's needs change. Tools, techniques, and context for applying violence to impose one's will upon others are not static. Hence, war colleges cannot be static and thus risk stagnation. Furthermore, war colleges do not stand alone. Within the defense establishment, war colleges are vital segments of a vast training, education, and development community that combines features tailored for parochial service responsibilities nested within a common, overarching, joint professional framework. Within US society, imperatives of healthy civil-military relations require American military professional education to nest within the broader national community, as one among many professions American society needs to survive and thrive.

War colleges seek to prevent war but must prepare their graduates to use violence or coercion successfully for security, liberty, prosperity, justice, happiness, and blessings better associated with peace. War as an instrument of protecting or realizing these higher aspirations draws on specialized knowledge and expertise requiring deep study. Indeed, the core professional expertise in the instrumental use of violence makes its mastery through education much more desirable than its development through practice.

Hooker offers valuable recommendations. Having reviewed recent literature on PME in general and senior-level (war college) PME in particular, my sense is we are ripe for a comprehensive review to assess existing programs and to consider new approaches aimed at making war colleges better.

What would a comprehensive review look like? Frankly, some of it already happens routinely. The Military Education Coordination Council (MECC), overseen by the Joint Staff, is a collaborative body empowered and motivated by the Goldwater-Nichols reforms to improve jointness across professional military education. Across the war colleges, PME leaders compare notes with other American PME institutions and with allied and partner counterparts around the world.

Responding to the *2018 National Defense Strategy* and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford, the MECC is working to revamp the Officer Professional Military Education Program to focus on learning outcomes, continuing a trend that has been building in PME and the American higher education community more generally. Complementary pairing of military and civilian accreditation processes induces a healthy dialogue between communities of national security professionals and representatives of other fields of expert knowledge associated with higher education. Additionally, MECC members are working to frame a new vision of PME and talent

management that directly answers the challenge outlined in the *2018 National Defense Strategy*.

Additionally, drawing the threads together from the foregoing sections, improvements should focus on how war colleges contribute to talent management and should include several important endeavors.

War colleges should increase their emphasis on faculty quality, particularly military faculty, as a means to improve student learning outcomes. Additionally, we should do more to highlight faculty experience—the tremendous value of our “second graduating class”—who have much to give back to the profession in future strategic and operational assignments.

We should, for example, take advantage of the authority to extend select faculty military officers beyond mandatory retirement dates to draw additional benefit from their professional seasoning. In addition to rotating more faculty back to strategic and operational assignments, we should identify serving national security professionals—military and civilian—who should be given extended time to conduct teaching, scholarship, and service using the war colleges as their home base.

War colleges should develop more fidelity about the experience, talents, limitations, and interests of incoming students as a means for assessing what might best assist them to meet the profession’s evolving needs.

War colleges should more clearly understand student talent to better tailor war college curricula to their anticipated future responsibilities and assignments. We should start by giving greater recognition to our students’ senior-level experience and expertise.

Program improvements should better leverage state-of-the-art insights on educational methodologies, tools to assess strengths and weaknesses of incoming students, and ways to incorporate student preferences. We should consider increasing ways to focus on individualized needs through mechanisms such as specialized elective programs and areas of concentrations that better match students’ anticipated future assignment paths and interests. Given improvements to collaborative tools, it may even make sense to share more experiences across the war colleges using online, resident, or blended methods, as is already the case with the JCLASS-EX.

Finally, keeping faith with the war colleges’ roots as extensions of military staffs, we should retain and even strengthen the manner in which faculty and student compositions—such as research papers, projects, war games, briefings, and outreach—contribute to exploration of and possible solutions to real-world problems. We should continue to provide relevant support through integrated research projects, connections to wargaming efforts (such as Unified Quest), and through our war college students’ and faculty members’ routine engagements with national security leaders across the entire joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational spectrum.

Conclusion

Professional military education has always focused on professional practice rather than basic research, the acquisition of knowledge, or the self-actualization of students. It is effective only if it contributes to achieving American national security aims. National security issues are exceptionally complex. War colleges are among the profession's key mechanisms for analyzing issues and working to develop effective solutions. Fundamentally, I concur with Hooker in his aspiration to make war colleges greater. But I disagree with him about how much the war colleges should look like civilian academic institutions. Although there are useful lessons and common approaches PME and civilian academia can share, none of the civilian programs I am aware of are adequate substitutes for any of the war colleges. I also do not envision a civilian program that should be.

The United States possesses a marvelous constellation of civilian and military educational institutions that stand among the best in the world. Stepping back to view officer professional development in its fullness, the complementary nature of contributions from both civilian and military education is an obvious benefit to society. The war colleges, along with the service academies, command and staff colleges, and several other professionally focused educational programs, should remain instruments with which the US military develops its professionals to meet American national security requirements.

The armed forces should not outsource this interdisciplinary obligation. America's armed forces are able to tap the world's best civilian higher education system to supplement professional education requirements. But the armed services have the fundamental responsibility to educate and to develop their own professionals—military officers—most prominently. Strong and healthy war colleges, driven by professional imperatives and supplemented by academic virtues, are crucial to America's national security.

AFGHANISTAN'S LESSONS: PART II

Denmark's Lessons

Sten Rynning

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ABSTRACT: This article argues despite opportunities to learn valuable strategic lessons from Denmark's effort in the Afghanistan War (2001–14), Danish civil authorities implemented a comprehensive approach policy that failed to establish a bridge to lessons learned by the military. Denmark's experience in the Afghanistan War demonstrates promises and perils of lessons learned processes.

In the dynamic security environment of the post-Cold War era, the small nation of Denmark has exploited its political-military agility to craft distinct contributions to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and argue that operational impact matters more than sheer size.¹ The so-called comprehensive approach to civil-military cooperation—the Danish and NATO version of whole-of-government policy—is a case in point. It was conceptualized during the Afghanistan campaign as a way to shape all strategic, operational, and tactical lines of effort into a multinational framework, and Denmark leveraged its tight-knit government community centered in Copenhagen and its can-do, activist strategic culture to be at the forefront.

Despite the promise of the comprehensive approach, however, the civilian government failed to learn strategic lessons. This failure can be attributed not least to the fact that the effort in Afghanistan was overwhelmingly military, whereas the comprehensive approach policy was civil-military. From the decision to deploy a battle group, and then put it in command of a specific and difficult territory—the Nahr-e Saraj district, comprising the commercial center, Gereshk, and part of the green zone along the Helmand River—the military went all in, adapting to counterinsurgency (COIN) warfare.

Other government agencies and especially nongovernmental actors have been less enthusiastic participants on the ground in Afghanistan. The fact that the celebrated comprehensive approach worked better in Copenhagen than in Helmand leads us to another source of failure, namely, the limited energy a nation can derive from its self-image. Danish officials like to convey that their country is a small, smart, and tough country. Lessons learned processes likely to confirm this self-image tend

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1 The author is grateful for the insightful comments from two anonymous *Parameters* reviewers; to Sibylle Scheipers and Hew Strachan for inviting this contribution to an Afghanistan workshop held in St. Andrews, Scotland, in January 2019; to Jens Ringsmose for constructive discussions; and to Julie Homegaard Milland for valuable research assistance. Where reference is made to Danish publications, the author has translated Danish titles into English.

to gain political support, whereas processes that are likely to challenge it do not.

Ultimately, Danish decisionmakers have proven unwilling to initiate learning processes that challenge the country's underlying culture of informal and reactive leadership. Danish security and development organizations have learned from the Afghanistan War, for sure, but as Danish civil authorities have preferred to play to their own perceived strengths while ignoring politically difficult issues, the overall result is impoverished learning. The Danish case thus illustrates the promises and pitfalls offered by lessons learned processes. Organizations need them, but political masters struggle to define and connect them. To paraphrase a US lessons learned inquiry, Denmark is a case study of how easy it is to encounter lessons but how difficult it is to learn—digest and implement—certain lessons, especially strategic ones.² This article explores the Danish case of learning selective lessons, tracing the interaction of national policy, military efforts, and the comprehensive approach.

Political-Strategic Lessons

As the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission concluded in 2014, the political parties behind defense agreements, which compose the large majority of parties across the political spectrum, initiated a formal lessons learned process culminating in mid-2016 in a set of three publicly available reports.³ But because this process focused on comprehensive and coordinated action to stabilize fragile states, it was not a comprehensive evaluation of Danish policy and Afghanistan engagement but of a narrow facet of the effort.⁴

The first report, managed by the Danish Institute of International Studies, a think tank under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (MFA), addressed the sum of international experiences with comprehensive approaches (also known as whole-of-government or defense, diplomacy, and development) to stabilization. It did not evaluate Danish policy in particular. The second report, led by development consultants hired by the MFA, explicitly addressed only the Danish development aid to Afghanistan. The third report, managed by the Royal Danish Defense College, assessed civil-military cooperation projects managed by the Ministry of Defense. As civil-military cooperation is a circumscribed set of activities, the report de facto dealt with a mere € 1.1 million of € 1,533 million in Danish military expenditures related to Afghanistan—0.07 percent.

The limited scope of the report could be, at least in part, a reflection of the political process of establishing the lessons learned mandate in the

2 Richard D. Hooker Jr. and Joseph J. Collins, eds., *Lessons Encountered: Learning from the Long War* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2015), 4–5.

3 Dansk Institut for Internationale Studier (DIIS), *Afghanistan: Lessons Learned 2001–2014*, Report 1 (Copenhagen: DIIS, 2016); DIIS, *Afghanistan: Lessons Learned 2001–2014*, Report 2 (Copenhagen: DIIS, 2016); DIIS, *Afghanistan: Lessons Learned 2001–2014*, Report 3 (Copenhagen: DIIS, 2016).

4 DIIS, *Mandate for Lessons Learned Process* (Copenhagen: DIIS, 2014).

first place. Several issues plagued negotiations over the mandate, finally adopted in November 2014 as ISAF was about to terminate its mission. The left-wing Socialist People's Party, part of the center-left government majority, wanted a comprehensive assessment, but one that highlighted the virtues of a comprehensive approach. Right-wing parties saw this as critical of the military effort and were reluctant to support such a comprehensive assessment. Partly for the same reasons, the parties split on whether a lessons learned process should take place at all, and if so, whether civil servants should run it or involve independent experts.

Consequently, the broad and independent format of the three lessons learned processes did not really address Denmark. They were written by independent consultants who were also recipients of ministry-controlled development aid, suggesting the possibility of less-than-independent findings. In military affairs, lessons were written in-house and concerned an exceedingly small proportion of the civil-military cooperation effort.

Significant political concern regarding political-strategic lessons learned from coalition conflicts in the early twenty-first century was evident in a parallel process that began in June 2012 and concluded only in February 2019. This process concerned the lawfulness of war in Iraq and the handling of detainees in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The original design of this parallel process aimed, in part, to hold accountable Danish decisionmakers and officials who might have acted wrongfully.⁵

Comprised of parties that had opposed joining the Iraq War in 2003, the center-left government that took office in October 2011 initiated this political-legal search for justice. A judicial commission of inquiry did proceed. But the effort was heavily politicized and undermined support for a comprehensive mandate behind the aforementioned three reports. Following a change of governments in June 2015, the judicial commission was closed. In the spirit of consensus in May 2016, however, the parties agreed to revive the commission but now as an historical inquiry into "the decision-making processes" that led to Danish military participation in interventions in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq.⁶

The revived but delimited inquiry of 2017–19 was mandated to balance political sore spots: the decision to become involved in the Kosovo conflict (1998–99), made by a left-wing government, and the decisions to join the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, made by a right-wing government. In theory, the blame would be spread equitably. Moreover, the inquiry was limited to the process that led to Denmark's decision to use armed force, not the subsequent war itself, leaving a politically convenient black hole of political-strategic learning.

The conclusions of the historical inquiry, in particular, amply demonstrate the discrepancy between parties' behavior when in

5 "Mandate for Inquiry into the Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," Danish Ministry of Justice (MoJ), April 11, 2012.

6 MoJ, *Agreement on Independent Historical Inquiry into Denmark's Military Engagement in Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan* (Copenhagen: MoJ, 2016).

government and when in opposition.⁷ On the one hand, the inquiry highlights the considerable degree to which shifting Danish governments, rhetoric notwithstanding, have pursued foreign policy activism from the same baseline—balancing support for the United Nations, the United States, and NATO. On the other hand, it highlights how political games result not only in the aforementioned discrepancy in behavior but also reveal a dearth of formalized national security policy prioritization. National security policy is developed and implemented informally and adaptively, which keeps strategic issues fluid and allows Danish political parties room for maneuver. The downside is a lack of a disciplining framework to identify political-strategic priorities and draw lessons.

While dissent among political parties is normal in democracies, the informal Danish political culture of domestic contest and competition has proven stronger than the imperative to draw from and to embed strategic lessons in a formal document of national security strategy. The three aforementioned reports, along with the historical inquiry, unsurprisingly, have not led to a course correction in strategic policy. Rather they have fueled an ongoing game of political contestation. The rationale of Danish decisionmakers—Denmark is better off reacting to events—has limited value for political-strategic learning and indirectly pushed the military, foreign policy, and development communities to focus on lessons relevant for their particular domains but not necessarily relevant beyond them. We shall explore each domain in turn.

Military Lessons

Denmark's engagement in Afghanistan started in December 2001, following a parliamentary decision to contribute aircraft and special operations forces to the international coalition.⁸ Given the size of the country, Denmark's contribution grew to considerable proportions, especially from 2008 to 2012, when the country deployed a battle group to Helmand province. Today, engagement continues in the form of a reduced training and capacity-building mission.

The Danish military effort in Helmand province was considerable, sustained, and consistently enjoyed greater public attention than civilian development aid, even as the latter increased along with the military effort. In 2008, Danish annual development aid, both multilateral and bilateral, to Afghanistan reached a level of € 65 million, which has largely been sustained. Notably, Denmark did not shy away from “walking the talk” as it deployed and sustained a military contribution beyond the capacity of most other similar states. Militarily, Denmark deployed a battle group to Helmand from 2008 to 2012, deployed a total of 18,376 personnel through the ISAF years, and sustained 43 casualties.

In January and February of 2006, the Danish government proposed, and parliament made, a decision to deploy Danish troops to ISAF

⁷ Rasmus Mariager and Anders Wivel, *Why Did Denmark Go to War?* (Copenhagen: Rosendahl's a/s, 2019).

⁸ Danish parliament decision B 37, December 14, 2001.

Regional Command South and in support of the British provincial reconstruction team (PRT) in Lashkar Gah, Helmand province.⁹ With this decision, Denmark shifted its profile from one of dispersal to one of concentration, and it gained territorial responsibilities of its own in the Nahr-e Saraj district.

Previously, Denmark had contributed around 50 troops for ammunition and mine clearing in Kabul, 50 troops to the German PRT in Feyzabad, 10 troops to the Lithuanian PRT in Chaghcharan, and 6 troops to the Swedish PRT in Mazar-e Sharif. Politically, these contributions reinforced Danish commitments to NATO and individual NATO allies and partners. But beginning in 2006, Denmark shifted to a lead role in the stabilization of a high-risk district.

Denmark rotated a total of 17 task force teams to Helmand province. At its peak, from 2009 to 2011, each team was comprised of approximately 700 personnel, and the Danish effort through the ISAF years totaled nearly 20,000 personnel (see figure 1). The peak years of dead and injured soldiers were likewise defined by the Helmand campaign. Team 3 of 2007 lost 1 soldier. The next seven teams lost a total of 34 soldiers before casualties declined well into 2011 (see figure 2).

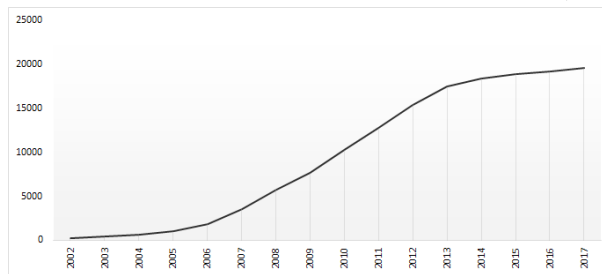


Figure 1. Number of Danish soldiers deployed to Afghanistan, 2002–17¹⁰

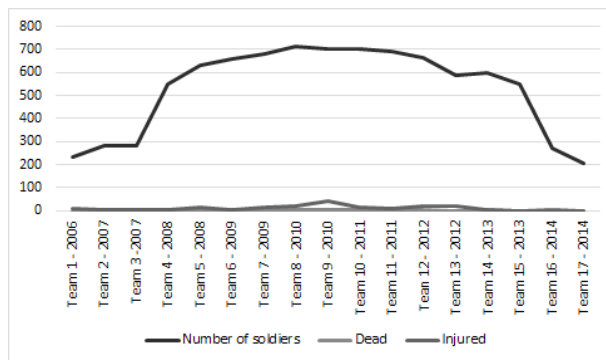


Figure 2. Number of Danish soldiers deployed, killed, and injured in Helmand, 2006–14¹¹

9 Danish parliament decision B 64, January 12, 2006.

10 Forsvarsministeriets Personalestyrelse, “Afghanistan,” May, 2019.

11 Forsvarskommandoen, “Danish soldiers in Helmand: Helmand Teams: Team 1 through Team 17,” Danish Defence: Because Something Is Worth Fighting For, December 9, 2019.

The adaptability of Danish forces is evident in this shift from dispersed and protected deployment to the war effort in Helmand. Several things are notable. One, the defense agreement of 2004 had a “first in, first out” emphasis reflecting current thinking in the United States and NATO on reaction forces and expeditionary warfare. Denmark did organize a branch of its armed forces for international operations in the early 1990s. But it was not until 2002, when NATO enlargement to the Baltic states provided for a safe regional space, that the full Danish force was geared to international operations.¹² Danish land forces were then organized into a standing first brigade for reaction and a second brigade for training and mobilization.

The Helmand campaign undid this organizational design, demanding a new design whereby sustaining a rotation of teams gained priority over first in, first out. Battalions were preferred, and brigades had no real function. Moreover, a deployed headquarters had to be developed for the larger and more complex functional requirements of territorial management. Finally, troops had to learn COIN warfare and interact with the full range of civilian actors in the battle space.

Adaptability can likewise be found in the Helmand effort in the shift from a dynamic, counterforce campaign to a more classical clear-hold-build campaign fashioned around principles of COIN warfare. While the distinction is relative, the period from 2006 to 2008 represents a highly dynamic facet of the campaign where Danish forces joined the platoon house strategy of the British, got into the heaviest fighting any Danish force had experienced since the German-Danish War (1864), and ultimately deployed Leopard 2 main battle tanks from Denmark to Helmand to deliver precision fire and generally dominate the opponent. In the spring of 2009, Danish forces also participated in Operation Panchai Palang, an offensive operation to gain control of central Helmand. Still, by this time, a new US administration and shift of ISAF command signaled a turn toward a less offensive, more engaging COIN strategy.

Gradually, the Danish task force shifted from patrolling along the Helmand River green zone to consolidating its presence in Gereshk and partnering with the growing number of Afghan soldiers and police forces in its area. Danish forces maintained a patrol base line in the green zone. But from early 2012, gradually transferred responsibility to Afghan forces. In fact, Operation Panchai Palang was intended to clear key Taliban strongholds and enable this strategy of transitioning to Afghan lead. Thus, in the operation’s wake, in the fall of 2009 and early 2010, the forward operating bases were given Dari names. By February 2012, Danish forces relinquished their commanding role to focus on partnering and training. A special operations forces task force deployed to Helmand in 2012 to accelerate capacity building among the

¹² Peter Viggo Jakobsen and Sten Rynning, “Denmark: Happy to Fight, Will Travel,” *International Affairs* 95, no. 4 (July 2019): 877–95.

Afghan forces, leading to the unit's first loss of life in an operation north of Gereskh.

The army concluded its lessons learned process in March 2016 with generic lessons applicable to deployments to Afghanistan, the Baltic, or elsewhere:

- The military requires a mandate with a clear campaign plan, an assessment of the capacity for force buildup in the mission area, a legal framework for handling detainees and for employing local labor, a memorandum of understanding and technical arrangements with host and partner nations, and the integration of information operations in army education.
- The military requires support for developing a full-spectrum force capable of meeting unexpected circumstances, similar to the aforementioned deployment of Leopard 2 battle tanks to Helmand and the widespread introduction of tactical and sub-tactical drones for surveillance and reconnaissance in Afghanistan, which also influenced the post-Afghanistan force-on-force environment in Europe.
- Denmark requires an adjusted organization capable of better synchronizing deployments with key allies and partners and capable of deploying female engagement teams.
- The military education programs need to tailor staff officer education to distinct institutional contexts of Denmark's allies. Particularly, the introduction of military English would support joint operations with the United States and Britain. Enhancements should also include a more stringent use of lessons learned processes and integrate the home guard where applicable.
- Denmark requires fielding enough equipment for training and deployment to meet such missions as those in Afghanistan as well as ensuring redundant capacities for force-on-force scenarios in Europe.
- Denmark requires robust leadership capable of initiative and with the ability to entice similar influence up and down the chain of command. For context, Afghanistan was a company commander's war, and European defense and deterrence brings brigade-level leadership back into focus.
- The military should tailor human resource policies to identify distinct leadership profiles for training and capacity building in advance of operations.
- The military should commit to maintaining six-month deployments to preempt deployment fatigue. These efforts should reflect the uniquely straining experience of sustaining task forces in Iraq and Afghanistan over several years.
- Denmark needs an operational and readiness culture that institutionalizes and maintains the ability of troops to endure camp

conditions by improving training facilities at home and by increasing access to facilities in partner nations.

- Denmark should strive for a maximum level of interoperability with allies, including close allies such as Britain, to align understanding of comprehensive approaches like those used in Helmand province more easily. This capacity should also lead to more proactive use of liaison officers.¹³

As mentioned, the army lessons are formulated in generic terms and concern its organizational, tactical, and operational issues. The army has drawn lessons and shaped them to a changing security environment and is now in the process of implementing—actually learning—the lessons. As such, it is a promising case of lessons learned. Neither the government nor parliament, however, has requested strategic lessons, thus weakening civil-military integration and preventing critical dialogue on strategic objectives, ways, and means in national decision-making.

As we saw, the official lessons mandate of 2016 deliberately excluded the full military effort from the learning exercise, confining political-military learning to the very narrow civil-military cooperation sliver of the campaign. We thus return to the particularities of Danish defense policy-making. Parliament's decisions regarding defense resource allocations also function to define the primary tasks of the armed forces. In mid-2012, as Denmark relinquished command of the Helmand task force, the defense budget was cut by 15 percent, and the depth of the battalion structure was reduced from six to three, precluding any type of Afghanistan-style campaign, and instead, preparing the army for European defense operations.

These cuts were thus enacted not in respect of lessons identified but as a consequence of political fatigue with the Afghanistan campaign and a desire to reduce the military footprint to the benefit of other government programs. Later, in January 2018, as Denmark was confronted with further NATO regional defense and deterrence demands, parliament increased the budget 20 percent, reinforcing the type of brigade-size autonomous capacity NATO was requesting.

These increases reflected strategic concerns—with Russian aggressiveness and the imperative for allies to deliver on NATO's Defense Investment Pledge, the so-called two percent commitment (to bring defense spending up to two percent of gross domestic product)—but were not in any particular way connected to the military lessons drawn from Afghanistan. These lessons, drawn just two years earlier in 2016, addressed crisis management operations as opposed to regional defense and deterrence, and they lacked a connecting bridge to the political realm of strategic lessons learned.

In sum, the army has drawn considerable tactical and operational lessons, and parliament has shaped budgets and overarching priorities

¹³ Danish Army, *Army Report on Ongoing Development of Force Contributions* (Copenhagen: Danish Army, 2016).

to its liking. But strategy documents bridging the political and military levels—a safeguard against a jumble of politics, policy, and wishful thinking—are absent.¹⁴ While consistent with the Danish political preference for informal and adaptive policy, it stands as a warning for Denmark's next employment of military force.

Comprehensive Approach Lessons

The comprehensive approach as a tool for coordinating and integrating relevant actors and policies in support of stabilization has been a Danish priority since 2003. But the comprehensive approach policy has also become a malleable tool—both for demonstrating a political desire for broad-based stabilization policy in an era of protracted and politically contentious armed conflict and for actually offering improvements in security, development, and governance on the ground. The comprehensive approach is thus both aspirational—some would say symbolic—and a policy tool. As such, it has gone through several phases and is likely to continue to change.

Version 1.0 of the comprehensive approach evolved from 2003 to early 2009. Denmark was a front-runner in placing “Concerted Planning and Action of Civil and Military Activities in International Operations, or CPA,” as the idea was originally called, on NATO's agenda.¹⁵ As NATO deliberations slowed, however, so did implementing the approach in Denmark where the key ministries—Foreign Affairs and Defense—did not take ownership of the issue. Further, the key Danish military effort in Iraq was not amenable to substantial civil-military coordination on the ground on the outskirts of Basra. But the transition out of Iraq from 2006 to 2007 and parallel entry into Helmand province offered Denmark a fresh opportunity to engage the policy. In 2006, at its Riga summit, NATO agreed to develop a comprehensive approach policy but then needed to work out details and implications.

In the following years, the political momentum behind the comprehensive approach increased, and Denmark spotted an opportunity to be influential. Critically, a new US policy, based upon the US Agency for International Development experience as it applied to comprehensive conflict analysis, led to the United States establishing an interagency system to manage contingencies.¹⁶ By August 2009, the United States was able to present a fully integrated civil-military campaign plan for Afghanistan.¹⁷ Inspired by this process, NATO adopted a substantial, comprehensive approach policy in 2008, which included both generic and Afghanistan-focused directives. Denmark was following suit, and a preparatory commission delivered a framework policy of comprehensive

14 Colin S. Gray, *The Strategy Bridge: Theory for Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

15 Kristian Fischer and Jan Top Christensen, “Improving Civil-Military Cooperation the Danish Way,” *NATO Review*, no. 2 (Summer 2005); and Peter Viggo Jakobsen, *NATO's Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Response Operations: A Work in Slow Progress*, DIIS Report 2008:15 (Copenhagen: DIIS, 2008).

16 White House, *Management of Interagency Efforts Concerning Reconstruction and Stabilization*, National Security Presidential Directive-44 (NSPD-44) (Washington, DC: White House, 2005), 1.

17 US Embassy, Kabul and US Forces Afghanistan, *United States Government Integrated Civilian-Military Campaign Plan for Support to Afghanistan* (US Embassy, Kabul and US Forces Afghanistan, 2009).

and integrated action that informed parliament's 2009 defense agreement for 2010 to 2014.¹⁸ In 2010, NATO allies agreed to put crisis management on par with collective defense tasks in the *Strategic Concept*, formalizing the window of opportunity for small allies to seek outsized influence on Allied affairs.¹⁹

To gain it, Denmark had to shift course. Version 1.0 of the comprehensive approach policy had become characterized by grand ambition and poor implementation. Policy development took place in the MFA by designated personnel from the ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense under the guidance of a ministerial oversight team. The intention was to set up an MFA Stabilization Department modeled on the British Stabilization Office. In the interim, the team pursued its mandate to generate projects for the comprehensive approach as it applied primarily to Afghanistan, but also to East Africa, and include these projects in the Helmand plans and other official strategy documents of Denmark. While well-intentioned, this setup failed to deliver a unified policy platform for the political parties in parliament and instead got mired in a range of bureaucracy and organization that de facto impeded interdisciplinary planning and action.

Sensing a moment of opportunity, Denmark turned to version 2.0 of its approach. It benefited from the establishment of the aforementioned Stabilization Department in August 2009, the political energy that flowed from the US-led surge in Afghanistan, and the commitment of allies such as Denmark to follow suit. Thus, the new department could focus on the development of an ambitious, comprehensive approach concept that integrated military, civilian government, and nongovernmental actors in a single policy framework in the context of hostile armed conflict.

The diplomat who ran the Stabilization Department during the critical opening years from 2009 to 2010, Rolf Holmboe, pinpoints a number of factors that allowed Denmark to help shape NATO's comprehensive approach policy in Afghanistan. First, comprehensiveness began in the political arena where a broad majority in parliament supported comprehensive foreign policy priorities and the full chain of command. Second, a culture of cooperation and trust had gradually emerged among the two key ministries and the defense command. Third, Denmark was both small and smart—it benefited from its tightly knit informal network among senior civil servants and managed to maintain its culture of high trust. This enabled coherent policy initiative in multilateral negotiations. In short, Denmark had a firm idea of where to go (comprehensive approach policy) and was liberated from “policy mafias”—pursuing sectarian issues such as development or military security—that, in Holmboe's experience, characterize larger countries such as Britain and the United States and complicate negotiation mandates.²⁰

18 Danish Ministry of Defense (MoD), *Danish Defense Agreement* (Copenhagen: MoD, 2009).

19 NATO, *Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (Brussels: NATO Public Diplomacy Division, 2010).

20 Rolf Holmboe, interview by the author, January 23, 2019.

This Danish moment of policy shaping influence could only last as long as the surge in Afghanistan. Beginning in 2013, Denmark had to consider if version 3.0 of comprehensive approach policy fit a non-Afghan centric world. Distinctively smaller in scale and ambition, Version 3.0 shifted the center of gravity from crisis management to crisis prevention. Similar policy debates within Allied governments and the United Nations centered on nebulous concepts of stabilization, resilience, and the need to counter violent extremism. Danish policy calls for a much smaller military footprint largely related to capacity building, and thus training of local security forces. It does not aim to coordinate development policy with nongovernmental, humanitarian actors.²¹ Version 3.0 is thus distinctively civilian and governmental.

Revealingly, the 2018–23 defense agreement entered in January 2018 does not at any point refer to “comprehensive approach” but rather to capacity building. Moreover, humanitarian organizations are kept separate from the military effort.²² The aid and development community was always skeptical of tight coordination and cooperation with the military on the ground and felt affronted by the ambitious policy outlined from 2009 to 2011.²³ As Holmboe puts it, MFA policy today aims to separate humanitarian work from ministry-led development and governance efforts, leaving that work to nongovernmental and private organizations.²⁴

Current MFA policy is less ambitious and high-minded than during the peak ISAF and COIN years in Afghanistan: it is not captured in one learning document, like in the army, but spread throughout various policy documents related mostly to African crisis-prevention efforts. While the MFA continues its efforts on the ground, only in a narrower MFA framework, does the political level seem content to wave the symbolic flag of comprehensiveness in Danish policy and claim the mantle of balanced foresight into conflict prevention, as opposed to war and armed conflict. As should be clear from this discussion, though, the Danish comprehensive approach policy has gone through both armed and unarmed phases and is today distinctively less comprehensive compared to version 2.0. Denmark’s engagement in conflict areas remains, as always, dependent on support from allies and partners.

Conclusion

In March 2012, then Foreign Minister Villy Søvndal argued in an op-ed that now was the time for Denmark to once again think and act like a small state. According to his sentiments and those of the left-wing government that took office in October 2011, Denmark had veered too

21 Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Justice, *Denmark's Integrated Stabilisation Engagement in Fragile and Conflict-Affected Areas of the World* (Copenhagen: Danish Government, 2013).

22 MoD, *Defense Agreement 2018–2023* (Copenhagen: MoD, 2018).

23 Astri Suhrke, *When More Is Less: The International Project in Afghanistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Peter Gill, *Today We Drop Bombs, Tomorrow We Build Bridges: How Foreign Aid Became a Casualty of War* (London: Zed Books, 2016).

24 Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Justice, *Denmark's Integrated Stabilisation Engagement*.

far in the direction of military and strategic activism, beginning in Iraq and continuing in Afghanistan, and had lost sight of a wider and softer engagement favoring international rules and institutions. Consequently, the 2013–17 defense agreement cut the defense budget by 15 percent.

In September 2015, a few months after taking office, the right-wing government commissioned a seasoned diplomat, Peter Taksøe-Jensen, to sort out Danish foreign policy and security priorities in order to put the spotlight on Danish national interests. According to this perspective, Denmark had closed one chapter on ambitious Afghanistan-style crisis management policy and another on social-liberal and neutralist foreign policy with a cosmopolitan flavor. Instead, Denmark needed to recommit to strategic activism, bolster its commitment to national and allied defense, such as that of Greenland and the Baltics, and avoid overstretch. As a result, the 2018–23 defense agreement increased the defense budget by 20 percent.

Political leadership matters for large states and small. In the Danish case, the scope for such leadership was always contextual. In Afghanistan, counterterrorist policy, detainees, and civilian casualty policy divided parliament, and thus inhibited leadership. Meanwhile, stabilization and support for Afghan development enjoyed widespread support and emboldened it. Thus, the comprehensive approach became a rallying cry on the Danish political scene because it served to build consensus and move the country beyond the divisiveness of the Iraq War (2003–11) more than it served as a tool for coordinated action on the ground. Therefore, the comprehensive approach served as a symbolic framework within which Danish political interests could come together and claim leadership.

All countries experience partisan politics. But in the Danish case, it has resulted in a peculiar type of informal national decision-making that bolsters flexibility for the top echelon of the government and enables political blame games in the electoral arena. There is obvious political convenience in this, but a major drawback of informality is that it effectively breaks the political-strategic learning process that renders strategic ambitions, ways, and means explicit and anchors them in documents that pull in, rather than pull apart, political-military lessons.

The military, as well as the development community, did the heavy lifting in Afghanistan and have drawn separate lessons. The army, which bore the brunt of the hardship in the ISAF mission, has identified a range of tactical and operational lessons it is now pursuing in a new framework of both regional defense and deterrence and continued international operations. The development community and thus the MFA inherited the celebrated comprehensive approach policy and reduced it to a mostly diplomacy-development engagement for preventing crises, primarily in Africa, from escalating. As such, Denmark has learned some selective lessons and steered clear of others. This application has helped the country move forward but also exposed it to new risks.

AFGHANISTAN'S LESSONS: PART II

Norway's Lessons

Harald Høiback

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ABSTRACT: This article argues Norway's minor role in the Afghanistan War (2001–14) included opportunities to learn about the evolution of military deployments over the course of a prolonged counterinsurgency-focused conflict, the civilian and military dynamics, and the political challenges of contributing to such a conflict.

After the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington in September 2001, Norway expressed sympathy for the United States and took precautionary measures to avoid being attacked.¹ Not knowing whether this had been a single burst of hyperterrorism or the start of a bigger wave, the United Nations Security Council, where Norway had a seat in 2001, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization soon expressed their support for the United States. Whether Norway should do anything concrete, apart from showing solidarity through words and resolutions, was an open question.

On September 10, 2001, the day before the attack, the Norwegian Labour Party of then Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg lost the general election. Two days after the attack, outgoing minister of defense Bjørn Tøre Godal, stated it was unlikely Norway would participate in any operations to find and punish the terrorists.² The government also said NATO's decision to invoke Article 5 did not automatically imply Norway would participate in any of the organization's missions connected to the attack. This surprisingly outspoken reluctance on the part of Norway was noted in the United States: the *New York Times* reported Norway had officially distanced itself from NATO's solidarity decision.³ Parts of the Norwegian media also criticized the outgoing Labour government for not standing by Norway's most important ally.⁴

The Norwegian government had several reasons for its reluctance in this matter. Primarily, it was unclear if the Americans would ask for assistance in Afghanistan. Perhaps, instead, the United States would request European nations increase forces in the Balkans to relieve American troops there. Second, Norwegian armed forces were rather stretched after another round of post-Cold War cutbacks. Most of

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1 The author wants to thank Dr. Paal Sigurd Hilde, the head of the secretariat that supported the Afghanistan commission, for his help in preparing this article.

2 Olav Bogen and Magnus Håkenstad, *Balansegang: Forsvarets omstilling etter den kalde krigen* (Oslo: Dreyers Forlag, 2015), 147.

3 Bogen and Håkenstad, *Balansegang*, 146–49.

4 Bogen and Håkenstad, *Balansegang*, 146–49.

Norway's expeditionary military hardware was, or had recently been, deployed to the Balkans. Third, it was difficult to imagine Norwegians fighting alongside American soldiers in central Asia. What was actually at stake for Norway in Afghanistan? Expeditionary warfare in that area would be unprecedented and completely out of the Norwegian character. All this changed, however, when the new government assumed control.

New Government and Political Determination

On October 19, 2001, the new center-right coalition government took office. The new government's primary security policy concerns became virtually the opposite of the previous Labour government. What would happen to Norway's interests and position in NATO if it did not participate in what could turn into a major undertaking involving all our closest partners? If the greater part of NATO supported the United States tangibly in the war against terrorism, it could be awkward for Norway to stay out in the short term, and even dangerous in the long run.

Norway's main worry since the Second World War has been its geographic isolation from the European mainland—contending with Russian maneuvers alone is not a comfortable thought. Hence, regardless of the feasibility of a coalition operation in Afghanistan, Norway had to participate. Even if operations ended in a quagmire, it would serve Norway's interests to be part of the debacle rather than stay home. A dysfunctional NATO with a tangible US presence was preferable to no NATO and the possibility of American isolationism.

Consequently, the new minister of defense, Kristin Krohn Devold, of the Conservative Party, saw it as her mission to get Norwegian boots on the ground in Afghanistan as soon as possible: "It was important to signal our support to the Americans by deploying forces quickly. To be relevant, we needed to be over there by Christmas."⁵ But in the fall of 2001, boots suitable for Afghan terrain and American needs were not available. After some months of preparation, the Norwegian government sent a small detachment of special forces to operate from Kandahar as part of Task Force K-Bar, a unit of mine clearers for the airports at Kandahar and Bagram, and a contingent of one C-130 Hercules cargo aircraft and six F-16 Fighting Falcons to be stationed at Manas air base in Kyrgyzstan.⁶ While small in number, the initial Norwegian contribution was significant in terms of skills and quality. Norway's first participation in an operation "outside the wire" occurred on January 15, 2002.⁷

5 Kristin Krohn Devold in John Inge Hammersmark, "Norske spesialstyrker-Fra skjult ressurs til politisk spydspiss," Forsvarets Stabsskole, *Militære Studier* 3 (2015), 71.

6 Norwegian Commission on Afghanistan (NCA), *A Good Ally: Norway in Afghanistan 2001–2014*, Official Norwegian Report NOU 2016:8 (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defense, June 6, 2016), 70.

7 NCA, *Good Ally*, 55.

Increased Contributions and Success

With the call for convening a *Loya Jirga* (Grand Assembly) in Kabul in December 2003, US pressure on allies for further contributions increased. The Ministry of Defence recommended in October [2003] that Norway offer a company to carry out security and guard duty. This would be a high-profile assignment that would [further] demonstrate Norway's ability and willingness to support [the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and] alliance efforts in Afghanistan. The assignment was also well suited to the [newly reorganized] Telemark Battalion.⁸

Norway was willing to let the company stay in Kabul for one year after the end of the *Loya Jirga*. Moreover, in the summer of 2004, Norway also volunteered to take the lead of one of the three battle groups in the Kabul Multinational Brigade. The Norwegian Battle Group 3 (BG3) was a significant contribution to the mission. The headquarters staff comprised 40 officers including 31 Norwegians, 8 Hungarians, and 1 Italian. In the Norwegian context, this was a robust staff, resembling a staff for a Norwegian brigade.⁹ Furthermore, BG3 included three maneuver elements reflecting the composition of the headquarters staff—one Norwegian, one Hungarian, and one Italian company.

In many ways, BG3 was a success story. The Norwegian Army found the mission important, feasible, and militarily relevant, and experiences drawn from this mission could be utilized back home. It was soon evident, however, that Norway would have to get involved in establishing the provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs). As a result, Norway came to an important juncture where military considerations pointed in one direction, that is, stay the course in Kabul, while political considerations pointed another, that is, operate a PRT.

Failures and Complications

According to the Norwegian Commission on Afghanistan, “in December 2003, US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld asked Norway directly to participate in establishing new PRTs.”¹⁰ In essence, the choice was to join either a British or a German PRT in northern Afghanistan. For several reasons, Norway chose the British-led PRT being established in Meymaneh in the Faryab province in northwestern Afghanistan together with Finnish forces. Approximately 30 Norwegians deployed to the PRT in July 2004.¹¹

While the PRT deployment added to Norway's main contribution in Kabul, the NATO secretary general signaled expectations that countries such as Norway should not only participate in PRTs but eventually assume command of one. The Norwegian military leadership was highly critical of taking on such a responsibility and recommended,

8 NCA, *Good Ally*, 58 (italics in the original).

9 NCA, *Good Ally*, 58; and Lars Lervik, “Norwegian battlegroup 3/Kabul Multinational Brigade/ISAF: Erfaringer fra multinasjonal bataljonsstridsgruppe i Kabul,” *Norsk militært tidsskrift* 176, no. 2 (2006): 13.

10 NCA, *Good Ally*, 59.

11 NCA, *Good Ally*, 59.

instead, continuing efforts in Kabul with a brigade command element and a company-sized unit. According to the Norwegian defense staff, considerations involving budgeting, personnel, security, competencies, materiel, and profiling, all pointed toward continuing to concentrate efforts in Kabul rather than assuming responsibility for a PRT.

The military was also concerned that assuming responsibility for the PRT in Meymaneh would give rise to expectations Norway would take on further obligations in the event of the withdrawal of other actors, particularly Britain. Having responsibility for a province, such as Faryab, could make withdrawing difficult, if it became necessary. Moreover, the military had no previous experience mentoring, advising, and reconstructing on foreign soil while simultaneously defending against enemy attacks. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Defense saw it as politically desirable to take a more active role in the ISAF expansion by concentrating Norway's presence in the north while simultaneously reducing its presence in Kabul considerably in the spring of 2006.¹²

In addition to employing the PRT in Meymaneh during March 2006, Norway also “deployed a robust company battle group of roughly 200 troops, including a battalion staff, to Mazar-i Sharif in order to relieve a British force. This new company was a quick reaction force under German command in Regional Command North [the ISAF command with responsibility for northern Afghanistan].”¹³ Compared to the BG3, the quick reaction force was bigger and more mechanized. While BG3 had been based on foot patrols in an urban setting, the quick reaction force needed to be able to support PRTs and other units in the region, and thus be more resilient and mobile. This was also a deployment well-suited for Telemark Battalion, which was in a process of converting from a conscription-based unit to a fully professional unit, something new to the Norwegian armed forces.¹⁴ But in 2008, as the size of the PRT steadily increased, Norway terminated its contribution to the quick reaction force and concentrated efforts in Meymaneh and the wider Faryab province.

Unlike the BG3 experience, the PRT endeavor was not a success. Neither the Norwegian government nor the military leadership initially knew what a PRT was or what it should do. And although at its strongest point the Norwegian PRT counted several hundred soldiers, this force was nonetheless insufficient to meet the demands of a province the size of Faryab, and no coherent Norwegian strategy was developed for it. Instead, the PRT commanders filled their six months in the theater with whatever they found reasonable. Moreover, the experience was not especially relevant for the Norwegian Army's tasks back home.

Complicating matters further, the Norwegian government instituted a clear separation between civilian and military activities

12 NCA, *Good Ally*, 59.

13 NCA, *Good Ally*, 60.

14 Arne Opperud, “Ledelse i strid-spørsmål om krig,” i *Intops, norske soldater-internasjonale operasjoner*, ed. Dag Leraand (Oslo: Forsvarsmuseet, 2012), 330.

in Afghanistan. Particularly, the major Norwegian nongovernmental organizations, heavily subsidized by Norwegian taxpayers, did not appreciate Norwegian soldiers doing their organization's work, arguing military personnel are not trained for development assistance tasks and therefore, tend to take a short-term view of development work.

Ultimately, this civil-military compartmentalization was inconsistent with the strategy of counterinsurgency operations that came to guide ISAF operations. The lack of clear guidelines from Oslo on how to bridge this gap led to frustration among Norwegian civilian and military personnel on the ground. The Norwegian government's 2009 Faryab strategy did not make matters any easier as it contained no clear guidelines for practitioners.

In total, Norway spent about 20 billion Norwegian kroner (approximately \$3.17 billion) on its engagement in Afghanistan. From 2001 to 2014, military expenditures accounted for about \$11.5 billion and civilian aid accounted for about \$8.4 billion. This amounted to a mere 0.26 percent of the estimated total international military effort, and 2.3 percent of the total international aid in the period.¹⁵ Norway was thus a relatively much bigger civilian than military contributor, ranking ninth among civilian contributions.

Major and Minor Contributions

From 2002 to 2009, Norway experienced two main stages in its deployments to Afghanistan. The first stage was Kabul-centric, which then evolved into a second, PRT-centric stage in Faryab. After 2009, the third and last stage took an Afghan security forces-centric approach where Norwegian forces concentrated most of their efforts on training and mentoring Afghan forces in support of ISAF's plans to transfer "responsibility for national security to Afghan authorities and security forces by the end of 2014."¹⁶ The main instruments for this effort were the operational mentoring and liaison teams.

Apart from these larger stages of Norwegian involvement in Afghanistan, Norway also contributed additional forces for shorter and longer periods, such as the commander of the then Kabul International Airport, provision of F-16s to ISAF, and support to different military staffs and field hospitals.¹⁷ The most important of these, however, was and still is the special forces training of the Afghan police Crisis Response Unit 222 in Kabul. The Norwegian special forces and the Intelligence Service also closely cooperated as part of the national intelligence support team to develop a concept where the full resources of the Intelligence Service were directly available to the special forces in the field.

15 NCA, *Good Ally*, 213.

16 NCA, *Good Ally*, 139.

17 NCA, *Good Ally*, 70.

Assessment and Lessons Learned

So far, this story about Norway's military contribution to the operations in Afghanistan presumably resembles that of many midsize European states. But in November 2014, the parliament decided to appoint an independent commission to evaluate the entire Norwegian endeavor. The Norwegian Commission on Afghanistan, established by a royal decree on November 21, 2014, worked for 18 months with a broad mandate to evaluate and to draw lessons from all parts of the Norwegian engagement in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014.¹⁸

The ten-member commission was chaired by retired Labour politician Bjørn Tore Godal, who had been both minister of foreign affairs and minister of defense. Lieutenant General Torgeir Hagen was the only other nonacademic expert in the group. A Dane, Professor Sten Rynning, from the University of Southern Denmark served on the commission. And several members were well-known critics of the operations in Afghanistan. A full-time secretariat of five, later six, members supported the commission in its work.

The report, which was translated into English, gives an historical overview of Norwegian engagement in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014 that includes chapters on military engagement, development aid, the PRT in Faryab, peace diplomacy, and international law.¹⁹ While neither Norwegian nor other attempts to negotiate a settlement were successful, Norway was one of the first countries to develop contacts with the Taliban, and peace diplomacy was an important Norwegian contribution. In the last part of the report, the commission spells out its conclusions and draws a range of lessons.

The commission argued Norway had three overarching objectives in Afghanistan: support the United States and NATO, help combat international terror, and assist in building a stable and democratic Afghan state. The commission found, by and large, Norway had achieved the first objective, that is, supported the United States and bolstered NATO's continued relevance. After a slow and reluctant start, Norway behaved like a good ally. The nation realized only partial success in achieving the second objective, fighting international terror. It failed to rid Afghanistan of international groups, and international terrorism is still an issue worldwide. The final objective, build a stable and democratic Afghanistan, was and continues to be a downright failure. Democratic institutions are still fragile, and the war continues.

In summary, the commission was clear the Norwegian contribution was a very small piece in a very large puzzle: Norway could make little overall difference in Afghanistan. There are many reasons why so many nations with so many resources achieved so little in Afghanistan. Presumably, the most important reason is too many of the objectives

18 NCA, forematter to *Good Ally*.

19 NCA, *Good Ally*, 21–47.

and approaches used in Afghanistan were internally inconsistent and contradictory.

The report did not stir much political controversy. All major parties in the parliament had been in the cabinet for the duration of the Afghanistan War, and as a result, there were no incentives for political finger-pointing in the parliament. The initial media response to the report's findings, however, was significant and concerned civilian engagement in Afghanistan to a much greater degree than military engagement.

As stated above, Norway was a bigger player on the civilian side of the Afghanistan engagement than it was on the military side, suiting Norwegian politicians quite well. But the Norwegian press persistently focused on the fact military expenditures in Afghanistan exceeded those of civilian expenditures. In order to counterbalance this publicity and the strong military footprint in Afghanistan more generally, in 2007, the Stoltenberg government decided to spend the same amount on civilian aid as it did on military activities in Afghanistan. Consequently, Norway poured 750 million Norwegian kroner annually into a system with low absorptive capacity.²⁰ Despite assurances to the contrary, aid had been pushed by political needs in Norway, not pulled by humanitarian end developmental needs in Afghanistan. When the commission's report described how Afghanistan had been turned into one of the world's most aid-dependent countries, and how the enormous amount of aid had contributed to widespread corruption, Norway's media responded harshly.

Even though the government invested time and money in the commission's work, the extent to which it had any impact on armed forces' doctrines and modus operandi is questionable. Few in the military showed any misgivings regarding the appointment of the commission, its members, or its findings. Most saw it as proper and reasonable to use time and money to look at the entire endeavor. Even though many recognized the important observations and recommendations made by the commission, the military had already identified lessons and implemented those relevant to future missions long before the publication of the report.

Changing Warfare and Cultural Shifts

Thus far, this article has investigated Norway's contribution to Afghanistan. The article will conclude by turning the table and examining what the Afghan endeavor did to Norway. During the 1990s, it was taken for granted in the armed forces that Norwegian politicians would not accept a big butcher's bill from far-off wars of choice. Norway had suffered casualties in Lebanon, the Balkans, and in UN operations elsewhere. But these were few and far between, and most were caused by accidents. That changed when Norway joined the coalition in Afghanistan.

20 NCA, *Good Ally*, 86.

In all, over 9,000 Norwegian men and women served with the military in Afghanistan. Ten lost their lives and 19 were seriously injured.²¹ Compared to countries like Denmark, 10 is not a big number, and the government and Norway could seemingly have stomached a lot more. Coffins draped with Norwegian flags were not a political liability, as we in the military previously thought. To the contrary: an important part of being a good ally was political willingness to pay the price in blood, not only in money.

In 1999, the Norwegian government had been uncomfortable with Norway's participation in Operation Allied Force against Serbia over Kosovo. One of the senior cabinet members, Valgerd Svarstad Haugland, was later harshly criticized for stating, "I don't like bombs" in the parliament, while her own government was sending Norwegian F-16s to the area.²² Still, the F-16s did not participate in the actual fighting, which was in-line with Norwegian traditions, equipment, and national character.

After 10 years in Afghanistan, the situation had turned upside down. Norwegian politicians had softened toward bombs and combat, as demonstrated over Libya in 2011, and had reinvigorated the highest-ranking decoration for gallantry, the War Cross with Sword, in 2009. Only heroes from the Second World War had been decorated with the medal, which was shelved 60 years earlier in 1949.²³ Furthermore, the center-left government of Jens Stoltenberg reinstated the medal.²⁴

If it was surprising the way the Norwegian government tolerated casualties, it was not particularly surprising they practiced a form of hands-off strategy. As we saw above, former Minister of Defense Devold's main concern was to get Norwegian boots on the ground in Afghanistan. When they arrived, the political mission was accomplished, so to speak. Military activities in theater were not on the political radar back home. Every politician in Norway knew, regardless of the outcome in Afghanistan, it would not decide Norwegian elections. For Norway, Afghanistan was not a puzzle to be solved, and the challenge was left to others, particularly the Americans and the British. Our puzzle, as a medium-to-small participant in the operation, was how to be part of a solution in Afghanistan and not part of the problem.

This situation meant, in principle, Norway had no caveats. But in practice, it did, triggering tensions between the military and the government. In particular, parts of the armed forces deplored the government's decision not to deploy to the southern part of Afghanistan where the fighting was heavier than up north. Some in the armed forces believed we should have been where our closest allies were, not where Germans and Swedes were, so to speak. Additionally, the strategic *laissez-faire*, favoring presence over practice, left considerable

21 NCA, *Good Ally*, 12.

22 Erik Solheim, *Nærmere* (Oslo: N.W. Damm, 1999), 413.

23 NCA, *Good Ally*, 203–4.

24 NCA, *Good Ally*, 204.

operational leeway for Norwegian military units. Much of what we did in Faryab was, in fact, military activity in search of a strategic plan or political intention. And even though Norwegians like to be portrayed as citizens of a peace-loving nation, our soldiers had no problems filling their days with combat if they could find it, regardless of lack of strategy. As stated in the commission's report:

Frustration among some soldiers at never experiencing "troops in contact" (TIC) situations before returning home can serve as motivation to actively seek out combat, even though it may interfere with achieving strategic-level objectives. This was also pointed out by some veterans themselves: "The paradox is that all the shooting is what gets the attention," said Tor. "Exaggerating somewhat, one could say that we hand out medals and awards to soldiers when there is shooting, not when we complete our task in peace and harmony like we are supposed to." This was a widely held view also among soldiers in the field.²⁵

Often, less recognition was given to soldiers who successfully completed assignments with minimal or no use of force, although decorations were awarded for actions not involving force. Perhaps due to some form of bad political conscience, operations in Afghanistan also gave a considerable boost to Norwegian veterans. Long before 2001, Norway had produced veterans from foreign wars, particularly in Lebanon and the Balkans, but the veterans were not a very self-confident group. This changed during Norway's involvement in Afghanistan. Even the Norwegian officer corps changed. Until recently, Norway was the only NATO member without noncommissioned officers and other ranks. As a rule, every military member in Norway, except conscripted soldiers, has been an officer. This has changed too.

Transformation and the Way Ahead

Norway was initially a reluctant member of the coalition of the willing. Afghanistan was not a place anyone had imagined Norwegian soldiers would go. Nonetheless, Norway became deeply involved in both military and civilian matters in Afghanistan. For a while, Norwegian Kai Eide was even special representative of the Secretary General of the UN to Afghanistan (2008–10).

During the years in Afghanistan, the Norwegian armed forces were transformed, particularly the army. Traditionally Norwegians had been peace supporters, and most of the military casualties it suffered after the Second World War were traffic accidents and stray bullets. During the years in Afghanistan, however, the Norwegian Army indeed became a fighting force, but only in small and rather independent units. Accordingly, combined arms and joint operations were not on the agenda and have become something we have to relearn. Provincial reconstruction and military observation teams will not be the answer if we have to fight for our own country. It is obviously important to learn from our mistakes, but it is just as important to learn from the relevant mistakes.

25 *NCA, Good Ally*, 65.

AFGHANISTAN'S LESSONS: PART II

Australia's Lessons

Rhys Crawley

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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes Australia's contribution to the Afghanistan War from 2001 to 2014. It recommends policymakers and practitioners consider applying a whole-of-government approach, embedding personnel in coalition headquarters, and limiting reliance on Special Forces soldiers in future interventions.

A survey of Australia's broader contribution to the Afghanistan War highlights the complex considerations of a coalition partner in a "war of choice" fought in an area geographically distant from its immediate region of strategic interest. By examining the many facets of Operation Slipper, Australia's military engagement in Afghanistan, three key lessons emerge that will help policymakers and practitioners avoid past mistakes and build on programs that serve Australia's national interests.

When facing similar conflict scenarios, Australia should consider the following: the need to look beyond the provision of security and consider a whole-of-government (interagency) and development approach from the outset; the reputational and experiential benefits accrued by selectively embedding Australian personnel in coalition headquarters; and the inherent hazards that accompany an overreliance on Special Forces.

Australia's War in Afghanistan: An Overview

The Australian public knows little of Australia's contribution to the war in Afghanistan. Few would be aware that between 2001 and 2014, more than 25,000 Australians served in, or in support of, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which made the nation the ninth largest supporter of the effort.¹ Moreover, Australia was the largest non-NATO contributor to ISAF.² The war cost Australia AUD\$8.3 billion.³ Tragically, 41 Australians were killed, and through January 2013, there had been

1 David Horner, "The Emerging Strategic Environment," in *On Ops: Lessons and Challenges for the Australian Army since East Timor*, ed. Tom Frame and Albert Palazzo (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2016), 49.

2 Michael G. Smith, "Australian Civil-Military Lessons from Afghanistan," in *Australia and Canada in Afghanistan: Perspectives on a Mission*, ed. Jack Cunningham and William Maley (Toronto: Dundurn, 2015), 151.

3 Peter Hall, "The Cost of the War in Afghanistan," in Cunningham and Maley, *Australia and Canada*, 119.

Dr. Rhys Crawley, historian at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, is writing the *Official History of Australian Operations in Afghanistan, 2005–10*.

249 physically wounded.⁴ The full extent of psychological injuries is unknown. But the numbers are clearly higher still, and suicide among discharged veterans is a growing problem.⁵

The decades following the Vietnam War are known within Australian defense circles as “the long years of peace.”⁶ In the absence of any major threat to Australia’s national security interests, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) kept busy with exercises and niche contributions to international peacekeeping missions.⁷ But in reality, exercises only provided so much training, and peacekeeping contributions involved only small numbers of ADF personnel.

By the early 1990s, as one commentator has written, an entire generation of “officers and soldiers had not seen any form of operational service.”⁸ The East Timor crisis of 1999—the largest deployment of ADF personnel since Vietnam—changed that. Since then, the ADF has been “involved in almost continuous military operations.”⁹ Afghanistan was but one of many.¹⁰

Operation Slipper, the name given to the ADF’s contribution to operations in Afghanistan, is perhaps best understood if separated into four periods (see figure 1). The first, 2001–2, covered the initial response following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The second, 2005–6, saw Australia’s return to the war, this time with Special Forces in Uruzgan province. In the third, 2006–10, Australia was part of the Dutch-led Task Force Uruzgan, and in the fourth, 2010–14, Australia was part of the American-led, and later took leadership of, Combined Team Uruzgan.

From 2001 to 2006, Australia contributed forces as part of OEF. But the majority of Australia’s Afghanistan experience from 2006 to 2014 was under ISAF’s banner and centered on Uruzgan. Australia’s main contributions were by way of ground forces. But as figure 1 shows, numerous other elements, notably naval assets; rotary and fixed-wing aircraft; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; logistics; and a bevy of Australian officers embedded in coalition headquarters worked in support of Australian and coalition forces. These contributions were spread throughout Afghanistan and the greater Middle East.

4 Australian Department of Defense (DoD), “Vale,” DoD, accessed November 7, 2019.

5 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (IHW), *National Suicide Monitoring of Serving and Ex-Serving Australian Defence Force Personnel: 2018 Update* (Canberra: IHW, 2018).

6 Horner, “Emerging Strategic Environment,” 34.

7 “Official History of Peacekeeping, Humanitarian and Post–Cold War Operations,” Australian War Memorial, accessed November 7, 2019; John Blaxland, *The Australian Army from Whitlam to Howard* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and David Horner, ed., *Official History of Australian Peacekeeping, Humanitarian and Post-Cold War Operations*, 6 vols. (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

8 Tom Frame, “Lessons and Learning,” in Frame and Palazzo, *On Ops*, 3.

9 Horner, “Emerging Strategic Environment,” 33.

10 Frame, “Lessons and Learning,” 1.

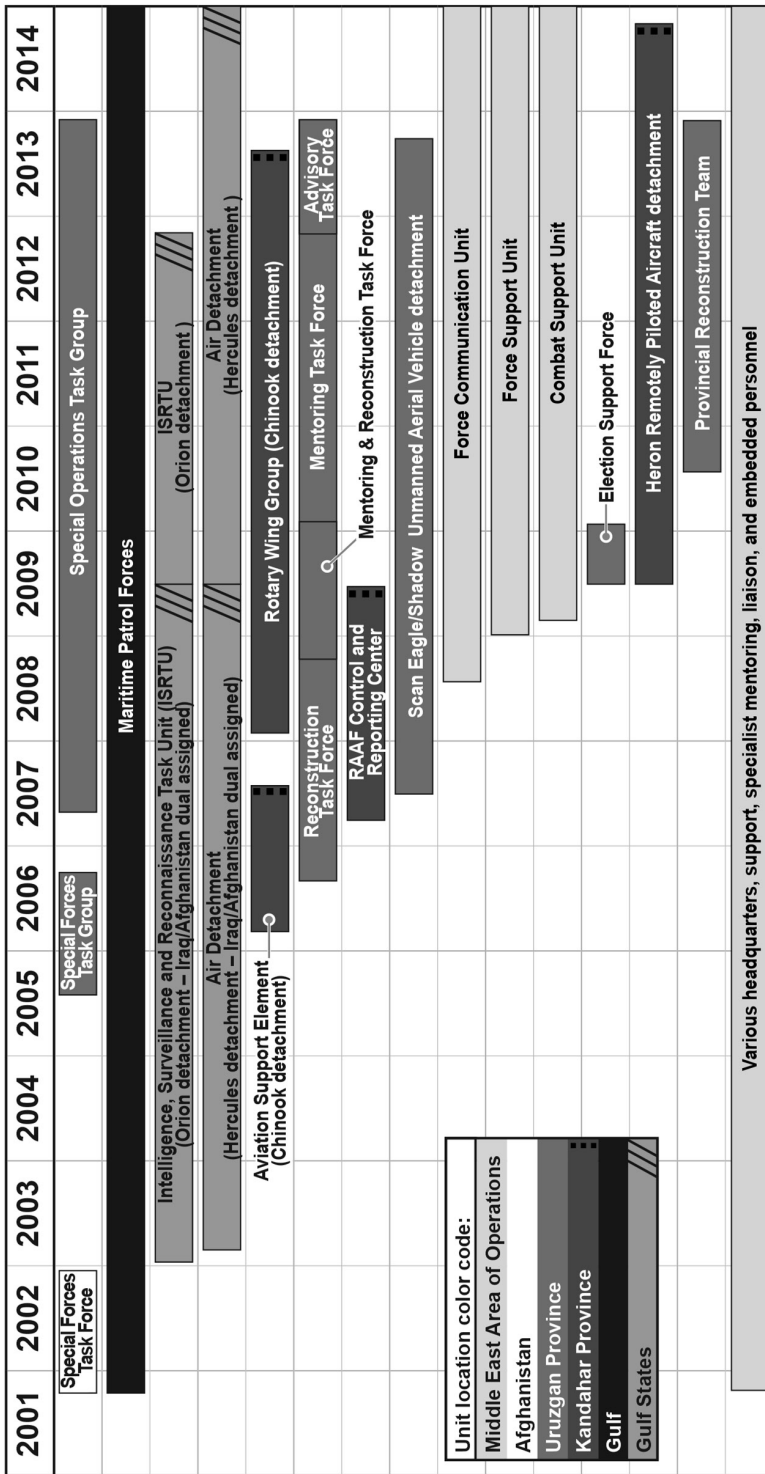


Figure 1. Operation Slipper¹¹

11 Dr. Steven Bullard, Australian War Memorial

Australia's 25th prime minister, John Howard, was in Washington, DC, on 9/11, having met President George W. Bush for the first time the day before.¹² The impact of the terrorist attacks on Howard was profound. Almost immediately, from a bunker in the basement of the Australian embassy on Massachusetts Avenue, he announced Australia “will stand by [the United States], we will help them, and we will support actions they take to properly retaliate in relation to these acts of bastardry against their citizens and against what they stand for.”¹³

Howard knew that in all likelihood Australia would be going to war in support of her great and powerful friend. His government soon invoked the mutual defense clauses of the ANZUS Treaty (1951) between Australia, New Zealand, and the United States as a practical show of its “steadfast commitment to work with the United States in combating international terrorism.”¹⁴ Australia's strategic objectives in contributing to the war on terror were twofold—help defeat al-Qaeda and make a down payment on the US-Australia alliance.¹⁵

Before long, Australia had committed military personnel to support the war in Afghanistan. These came from each of the ADF's three services—the Royal Australian Navy, Australian Army, and the Royal Australian Air Force. But the main role, and certainly the one that provided the most visible and significant contribution, was Australia's Special Forces Task Force.¹⁶ Between October 2001 and December 2002, three rotations of predominantly Special Air Service Regiment troops—each numbering some 200 personnel—worked alongside their US counterparts in southern and eastern Afghanistan.

The task force was involved in some firefights, notably Operation Anaconda. The main strength of the task force to OEF, however, was its ability to undertake self-sustaining, long-range reconnaissance patrols, some lasting for weeks, while liaising with and observing local Afghans. The intelligence they gathered informed coalition plans and guided coalition air support onto targets.¹⁷ The government never intended for a long-term Special Forces commitment and brought the troops home in late 2002. Until 2005, Australia maintained a small footprint in Afghanistan—usually one, sometimes two, officers.¹⁸ Significantly, and no less controversially, during this period Australia joined the United States, Britain, and Poland in the invasion of Iraq.¹⁹

12 John Howard, *Lazarus Rising: A Personal and Political Autobiography* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 2011), chap. 31.

13 Howard, *Lazarus Rising*, 382.

14 John Howard, “Application of ANZUS Treaty to Terrorist Attacks on the United States,” Parliament of Australia press release, September 14, 2001.

15 Karen Middleton, *An Unwinnable War: Australia in Afghanistan* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2011), 38.

16 Horner, “Emerging Strategic Environment,” 43.

17 Middleton, *Unwinnable*, 58–66.

18 Nicole Brangwin and Ann Rann, *Australia's Military Involvement in Afghanistan since 2001: A Chronology* (Canberra: Parliament of Australia, 2010).

19 Albert Palazzo, *The Australian Army and the War in Iraq, 2002–2010* (Canberra: Directorate of Army Research and Analysis).

After a break, the ADF returned to Afghanistan in late August 2005. As before, the Howard government chose to send Special Forces in the form of a Special Forces Task Group (SFTG) consisting of elements from the Special Air Service Regiment and commandos from the 4th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment (Commando).²⁰ Working within a US Special Forces construct, their operations focused on Uruzgan and Daykundi provinces in central southern Afghanistan.²¹

The strategic rationale for Australia's involvement was similar to that offered in 2001—Howard favored an in-and-out approach, that is, the SFTG would return to Australia after 12 months.²² Throughout those 12 months, three rotations of approximately 200 personnel were engaged in a myriad of tasks—long-range, vehicle-mounted reconnaissance; security patrols; direct action assaults; clearance operations; and civic action programs. It was a busy time operationally and intellectually as the SFTG attempted to both understand and close with the enemy—known at the time as the “anti-coalition militia.”²³

On schedule, although not without debate about whether it was the right move, the SFTG returned home in September 2006.²⁴ That 12 months represented the highest intensity of combat and prolonged battlefield stress faced by the ADF since Vietnam. In the eyes of senior ADF leaders, it set the conditions for Task Force Uruzgan to begin its work in Uruzgan province as part of the ISAF Stage 3 expansion into Regional Command South.²⁵

In addition to the SFTG, in early 2006, Australia also committed two of the army's CH-47D Chinook helicopters to the coalition pool in Kandahar. Initially these were largely confined to logistic support. But as time progressed, the helicopters were configured and approved for combat missions. Significantly, both Chinooks were involved in a joint Canadian-Australian direct action assault in July 2006, which saw the Chinooks insert and extract the Canadians under extremely heavy fire.²⁶ Australia maintained its Chinook deployments on and off for the remainder of the war.²⁷

When the Australian government announced its intention to deploy the SFTG, it also told the public it was looking at the possibilities of contributing to an ISAF-led provincial reconstruction team.²⁸ After some delay, it settled on partnering with the Dutch as part of the Dutch-led

20 John Howard, “Press Conference Parliament House, Canberra,” transcript ID 21821, Prime Minister and Cabinet, July 13, 2005.

21 Steven Bullard, “Australia in Afghanistan 2001–13,” *WarTime* 64 (Spring 2013): 17.

22 Howard, “Press Conference.”

23 Chris Masters, *No Front Line: Australia's Special Forces at War in Afghanistan* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2017), chaps. 5–7.

24 Angus Houston, “SOCAUST Media Briefing Post Op Slipper,” Australian Department of Defence transcript no. MECC 60927/06, Parliament of Australia, September 27, 2006.

25 Houston, “SOCAUST Media Briefing.”

26 Bernd Horn, *No Ordinary Men: Special Operations Forces Missions in Afghanistan* (Toronto: Dundurn, 2016), chap. 5.

27 Brangwin and Rann, *Australia's Military Involvement*.

28 Howard, “Press Conference.”

task force in Uruzgan. As noted earlier, this saw a shift in Australia's commitment from OEF to ISAF.

The deployment of a 400-strong reconstruction task force (RTF) also marked a shift in Howard's preferred strategic concept of deploying Special Forces for a short, defined mission and then withdrawing them before they got involved in peacekeeping, stabilization, and nation building.²⁹ Howard's actions revealed he realized Afghanistan would not be a quick fight.³⁰ Indeed, the RTF was the first of what would amount to 13 conventional Australian task forces to Uruzgan.³¹

Between August 2006 and October 2008, Australia sent four RTF rotations to Uruzgan.³² The RTFs were engineer heavy, with a significant force-protection element, and were increasingly employing combined arms theory and practice. Over the course of more than two years, the RTF, in the words of its first commanding officer, "worked to rebuild the physical infrastructure of Uruzgan province, to build an indigenous capacity to undertake engineering activities there."³³ The latter was achieved through a trade training school which focused on providing carpentry skills to Afghan youth.³⁴

On top of its own work, the RTF was ultimately in Uruzgan "to support the Dutch Provincial Reconstruction Team."³⁵ It was, in essence, an effort to win "hearts and minds" and thus turn people away from the insurgency.³⁶ From the start, the RTF concept of operations was to take a "*top down, bottom up*" approach by rebuilding government infrastructure as well as doing small-scale missions requested by villages.³⁷ The projects, which included the construction of schools, bridges, health facilities, and patrol bases, grew in size and scope. In 2008, the RTF briefly left Uruzgan to work on higher coalition construction priorities in Zabul province.³⁸

During May 2007, a Special Operations Task Group of 300 soldiers returned to Uruzgan. Australia had wanted it to operate as part of OEF. The Netherlands insisted otherwise. Australia relented; the 17 task group rotations through the end of the war were therefore part of ISAF's effort and reported to ISAF special operations forces headquarters rather than Task Force Uruzgan (ISAF special operations forces were commanded on a rotational basis by British and Australian officers).³⁹ The troops in

29 Hugh White, "Why Australia Needs a Much Bigger Army," *The Age*, July 20, 2005.

30 White, "Why Australia."

31 Gareth Rice, "What Did We Learn from the War in Afghanistan?," *Australian Army Journal* 11, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 7.

32 Brangwin and Rann, *Australia's Military Involvement*.

33 Mick Ryan, "The Other Side of the COIN: Reconstruction Operations in Southern Afghanistan," *Australian Army Journal* 4, no. 2 (Winter 2007): 126.

34 Ryan, "Other Side," 134.

35 Ryan, "Other Side," 126.

36 Ryan, "Other Side," 126.

37 Ryan, "Other Side," 130 (italics in original).

38 Bullard, "Australia in Afghanistan," 18; and Stuart Yeaman, *Afghan Sun: Defence, Diplomacy, Development and the Taliban* (Brisbane: Boolarong, 2013).

39 Middleton, *Unwinnable*, 185.

the task group, most of whom did multiple tours, “carried the burden of taking the fight to the Taliban . . . by targeting key leaders, insurgent compounds, weapons caches, bomb-making facilities, and drug-related criminal elements.”⁴⁰

By 2008, Australia had a new government. At his first meeting of the National Security Committee of Cabinet, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd asked the ADF’s senior leaders for an explanation of Australia’s strategy in Afghanistan. At first he “was met with blank looks.”⁴¹ Eventually, it emerged that since 2001, Australia’s strategy, as Rudd understood the situation from conversations with the Chief of the Defence Force, “had largely been a matter of honouring our alliance obligations and going where the Americans thought we could make the best contribution, given the type and size of our military resources.”⁴² Rudd said Australia had to find a better reason to be in Afghanistan than just keeping the United States happy.⁴³ His government then commenced a strategic review but held off implementing its findings until the Obama administration made its intentions clear.⁴⁴

The combination of Rudd’s desire to do something different and the coalition’s adoption of a counterinsurgency strategy caused a slight shift in Australia’s focus. In October 2008, a mentoring and reconstruction task force replaced the RTF. Over two rotations, the task force continued with its reconstruction tasks.

Based on an infantry battalion rather than engineer regiment, however, the task force shifted its—and therefore Australia’s—main effort from reconstruction to mentoring an Afghan National Army (ANA) *kandak* (battalion). It did this through an operational mentoring and liaison team.⁴⁵ The second rotation grew in size and responsibilities—thus allowing it to mentor more ANA units and to provide combat power in support of the 2009 elections. As such, the overall numbers of ADF personnel in country increased to more than 1,500 (see figure 2).⁴⁶

Australia’s efforts and focus underwent another shift in February 2010. Five rotations of the newly named mentoring task force (MTF) focused solely on advising and developing the capacity of 4th Brigade, ANA. Drawing on the experiences of the mentoring and reconstruction task force, the MTF maintained an aggressive patrolling program, living and working from patrol bases that now dotted Uruzgan’s landscape. The added emphasis on mentoring saw Australian forces, along with their Afghan partner units, push into parts of Uruzgan province that hitherto had been the responsibility of Dutch and French operational mentoring and liaison teams. This was especially the case from August

40 Bullard, “Australia in Afghanistan,” 18.

41 Kevin Rudd, *The PM Years* (Sydney: Macmillan, 2018), 12.

42 Rudd, *PM Years*, 13.

43 Rudd, *PM Years*.

44 Rudd, *PM Years*, 139.

45 Bullard, “Australia in Afghanistan,” 19; and Peter Connolly, *Counterinsurgency in Uruzgan 2009*, Land Warfare Studies Centre Study Papers no. 321 (Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, 2011).

46 Connolly, *Counterinsurgency*, 8; and Horner, “Emerging Strategic Environment,” 47.

1, 2010, when the Dutch handed responsibility for Uruzgan to the United States.

The United States commanded the newly named Combined Team Uruzgan until Australia assumed that responsibility in late 2012.⁴⁷ From the perspective of one of its commanding officers, the MTF “sought simply to get the Afghan Army to weaken the insurgents such that the people would be left with no alternative but to collaborate with the agencies of the Afghan Government.”⁴⁸ It did this by maintaining a persistent presence in insurgent-controlled or insurgent-contested areas, thus reducing insurgent freedom of movement, and by extension, aiming to convince the population that Afghan government dominance was inevitable.⁴⁹ Of course, such efforts were designed to fulfill the security pillar of ISAF’s campaign plan; governance and development were mostly left to others.

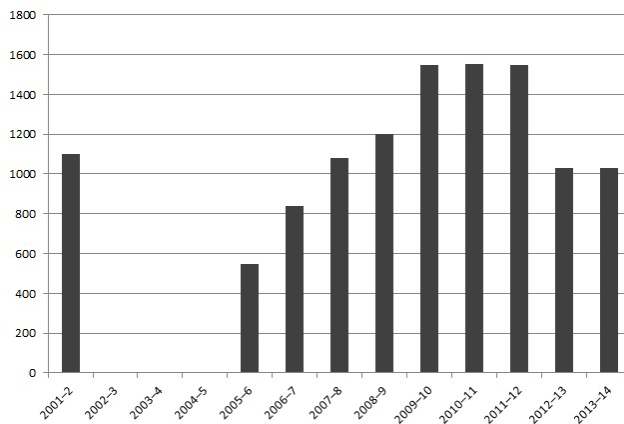


Figure 2. Authorized ADF troop strength in Afghanistan⁵⁰

Like the coalition more broadly, throughout this period the Australian government was firmly focused on getting out of Afghanistan. Its exit strategy was predicated on two factors: transitioning responsibility of local security to Afghan forces and sticking to the coalition timetable of 2014. An end date rather than end state would determine when Australia’s job was done. In this regard, though, Australia was cautious to set an end date before other coalition partners had shown their hand.

In line with its aims and appetite for risk, Australia gradually shifted its focus from mentoring to advising. This was especially the case when green-on-blue attacks increased the threat to ADF personnel

47 Nathan Church, *Australia at War in Afghanistan: Updated Facts and Figures*, Research Paper Series 2013–14 (Canberra: Parliament of Australia, December 13, 2013).

48 The Commanding Officer of an Australian Battle Group in Afghanistan in 2011, “Commanding Officer’s Observations: Mentoring Task Force Three,” *Military Operations* 2, no. 2 (Spring 2014): 5.

49 Commanding Officer, “Commanding Officer’s Observations.”

50 Data collected by the Australian War Memorial.

living and working with their ANA counterparts. Australia also assumed responsibility for the local provincial reconstruction team, thus improving the whole-of-government presence on the ground and allowing for a greater focus on capacity building.⁵¹ In December 2013, the last Australians left Uruzgan. About 400 personnel remained in training and support roles in Kandahar and Kabul.⁵² Today, around 300 Australians are still training, advising, and assisting in Afghanistan as part of the Resolute Support Mission.⁵³

In assessing Australia's contribution in Afghanistan, the first point to keep in mind is unlike the commitment of a brigade-size task force and ownership of a province in Vietnam, Australia deployed small elements as part of a larger coalition force. The fact the ADF was a small cog in a larger coalition machine is an important piece of context when examining Australia's war in Afghanistan.

There was no Australian concentration of force in Afghanistan—no Australian fast jets or artillery supported ADF elements on the ground in Uruzgan. For this and more, Australia relied on coalition partners. Instead, the ADF filled niche roles that reflected Australia's appetite for risk and its wider strategic priorities.⁵⁴ As one commentator has written, Australia's participation was "carefully calibrated," with successive Australian governments balancing their aversion to casualties with the reality that Afghanistan is not in Australia's strategic area of interest.⁵⁵

Next, most of Australia's operational experience in Afghanistan was at the platoon level or lower. The fact the ADF, and especially the Australian Army, "had lost foundational war fighting skills at anything above sub unit level," was not lost on some in the ADF senior leadership.⁵⁶ Since at least 2004, elements of the ADF have recognized the importance of and attempted to alleviate the potential of being unprepared for the future by changing the structure of the army to create all-arms brigades and to improve the force-generation cycle to ensure the army can sustain long-term operations.⁵⁷

Despite all of this, the high operating tempo in places such as Afghanistan, has led to the ADF becoming "a far more sharp-edged force" than the one that existed when the East Timor crisis hit in 1999.⁵⁸ Whether or not Australia's presence and contribution made a difference or was worth the costs is open to debate. The answers vary depending on who is asked and at what level of war the question is directed.

51 Church, *Australia at War*, 14.

52 Emma Griffiths, "Australian Soldiers Complete Withdrawal from Afghanistan's Uruzgan Province," ABC News, updated December 16, 2013.

53 "Global Operations Afghanistan: Operation Highroad," DoD, accessed November 7, 2019.

54 John Blaxland, "The Army and Government Objectives," in Frame and Palazzo, *On Ops*, 283.

55 Blaxland, "Army and Government Objectives," 283.

56 Lieutenant General David Morrison, Chief of Army, quoted in Luke Carroll, "Steward of the Profession: Making Generals," in *The Battles Before: Case Studies of Australian Army Leadership after the Vietnam War*, ed. David Connery (Newport, Australia: Big Sky, 2016), 78.

57 Major General Ken Gillespie (later Lieutenant General, Chief of Army) "The Challenges Facing a Land Commander," *Australian Army Journal* 1, vol. 2 (Winter 2004): 51–60.

58 Blaxland, "Army and Government Objectives," 290.

Admittedly, it is difficult to balance the achievements of the past with news of Taliban gains and continued fighting in 2019.⁵⁹

Lessons

“It is only through rapid adaptation that a military organisation can keep pace with an adversary who is also evolving. Plainly, both combatants seek an advantage over the other,” wrote Albert Palazzo.⁶⁰ “To defer lesson learning,” he continued, “risks losing the contest for ideas.”⁶¹ At the tactical level, the ADF had various mechanisms to identify and to disseminate lessons from Afghanistan, sometimes before the next rotation deployed.⁶²

The primary aim of these short-term lesson loops was to prepare soldiers and subunits for what they might face on operations: adaptation in tactics, techniques, and procedures, as well as equipment.⁶³ There is a chance the niche nature of Australia’s contribution means the ADF did not learn the right lessons or its lessons were incomplete.⁶⁴ There is also the reality that the wrong lessons might be drawn from a war that did not feature enemy air power, artillery, counterintelligence capabilities, high-end equipment, or cyberwarfare.

Nonetheless, the processes for identifying lessons at the tactical level were not matched at the operational, strategic, administrative, or institutional levels. No formal reviews, for instance, were conducted on these aspects until after Australian forces had left Uruzgan.⁶⁵ Senior practitioners and military institutions should revisit, and not repeat, this approach lest they lose the contest of ideas or forget those lessons encountered and insights from the “longest war.”⁶⁶ The above survey, as well as work undertaken to date for the *Official History of Australian Operations in Afghanistan*, identifies three key lessons that deserve further consideration before Australia next finds itself as a junior partner in a coalition counterinsurgency effort.

Lesson One: Consider a Whole-of-Government Approach from the Start

The truism that military action alone would not bring stability or security to Afghanistan was not lost on those planning Australia’s contribution.⁶⁷ When it came to deploying civilians, however, the

59 Bill Roggio, “US Military Downplays District Control as Taliban Gains Ground in Afghanistan,” *Long War Journal*, January 31, 2019.

60 Albert Palazzo, “Postscript,” in Frame and Palazzo, *On Ops*, 301.

61 Palazzo, “Postscript.”

62 Palazzo, “Postscript,” 285–86.

63 Palazzo, “Postscript,” 303.

64 Blaxland, “Army and Government Objectives,” 3.

65 Palazzo, “Postscript,” 299, 307; and “Army Institutional Lessons Study,” Australian Army, September 7, 2016.

66 Richard D. Hooker and Joseph J. Collins, eds., *Lessons Encountered: Learning from the Long War* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2015); and several articles in *Parameters* 49, no. 3 (Autumn 2019).

67 Frame, “Lessons and Learning,” 6.

Howard government decided it was too dangerous, preferring instead to leave nation-building work to other entities, such as the United Nations, nongovernmental organizations, or the Dutch. This should not downplay the significance of Australia's aid donations, which totaled over AUD\$1.2 billion.⁶⁸ But Australia's war in Afghanistan was dominated by the military, which carried the burden both in funds and risks. Australian diplomats, development experts, and civilian police were not seen in any meaningful numbers until after the Dutch departed Uruzgan in 2010.

The lessons to be learned from Australia's experience, as well as those of the coalition in general, are numerous. First, if Canberra really wants to make a difference on the ground, it needs a greater interagency commitment as soon as the security situation permits. Moreover, it needs to be willing to take outright responsibility for more than the security pillar of a counterinsurgency campaign. It should ensure better multiagency cooperation and the integration of the whole-of-government efforts with those of coalition partners, and it needs to resource the commitment appropriately.⁶⁹ By the time these realities were implemented in Afghanistan, Australia was already working toward its exit strategy of transitioning responsibility to Afghan authorities.

Lesson Two: Maintain a Selective Embed Program

A defining feature of Australia's war was the visibility and effectiveness of its embedded officers in coalition headquarters across OEF and ISAF. Anecdotally, it was not unusual to have an Australian in ISAF headquarters briefing another Australian in Regional Command South, both speaking with the weight of their respective coalition commanding generals. American General Stanley McChrystal had Australians spread throughout his headquarters. A two-star general was his senior military adviser to the Afghan defense minister. A one-star general coordinated the ISAF security response for the 2009 Afghan elections. And another one-star general was a senior intelligence officer.⁷⁰

Being a non-NATO member, Australia was able to bypass the flags-to-task ratios and take a strategic approach to select where it placed its well-trained, highly proficient officers. Consequently, the ADF's leadership focused on getting people into positions that increased Australia's exposure to high-level decision-making and theater operations and then keeping an Australian in those jobs so long as it suited national interests. This program also benefited those individuals, exposing them to significant coalition machinations, personalities, and pressures.

These few well-placed people often were more visible than the hundreds of troops in Uruzgan. Several coalition generals have spoken in surprise about Australia's successes in this regard and have commented

68 Church, *Australia at War*.

69 Australian Civil-Military Center, *Afghanistan: Lessons from Australia's Whole-of-Government Mission*, (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2016).

70 John Faulkner, "Australian Appointed as the Senior Military Advisor to the Afghanistan Defence Minister," Parliament of Australia, February 26, 2010.

they wished they would replicate that access. Notably, they have also invariably praised those officers.⁷¹ It was a deliberate policy, enabled because of Australia's historic links with the Five Eyes intelligence partnership countries that dominated Regional Command South and ISAF Headquarters, as well as the performance of those individuals.

This selective embed program delivered huge benefits to Australia. Aside from exposing a generation of senior officers to coalition warfare at the operational and strategic levels, it allowed Australia to have a say in shaping the war at the tactical level without having to deploy too many people, expend large sums of money, or put people unnecessarily in harm's way.⁷² It delivered strategic bang for the buck, allowing the ADF to meet the government's objective of supporting the United States without undue risk. The lesson, therefore, is Australia, leaning on the reputation it has gained in Afghanistan, as well as its access to Five Eyes intelligence material, should continue to maintain a highly targeted program of embedded officers.

Australia must be careful, however, not to develop a reputation for contributing embeds at the expense of boots on the ground. In Iraq, for example, the ADF was criticized for having a highly capable battle group with restrictive rules of engagement. Such an approach did not win Australia any favors among its coalition counterparts.⁷³ The Iraq example shows that a successful embed program has to be paired with adequately sized forces engaged in operations, with few caveats. It mostly achieved this in Afghanistan. Tied to lesson one, Australia should aim to expand its embed program outside military channels, to include more civilians, and to use the exposure and the experience gained to engender a greater whole-of-government approach on the ground.

Lesson Three: Be Careful of Overreliance on Special Forces

As noted earlier, Special Forces were the force of choice for Howard. He saw in them less risk, less cost, and greater flexibility. Undoubtedly their smaller footprint, perceived lower casualty rates, high operations security, and familiarity with coalition Special Forces, appeals to risk-averse governments, especially those embarking in wars of choice, as opposed to wars of necessity.⁷⁴

It is no surprise then that Howard used them to spearhead his commitments to Afghanistan in 2001, Iraq in 2003, and Afghanistan again in 2005. Recent media reports of cultural issues within the Special Operations Command and an ongoing inquiry by the Inspector-General of the ADF into alleged war crimes committed by Special Forces soldiers in Afghanistan, however, suggest successive governments may have overused, and even misused, Australia's Special Forces.

71 Interviews conducted by the author.

72 M. A. Thompson, "An embedded staff officer in Afghanistan: observations from 'the engine room,'" *Australian Defence Force Journal* 196 (2015): 41–43.

73 Jim Hammett, "We Were Soldiers Once . . . The Decline of the Royal Australian Infantry Corps?," *Australian Army Journal* 5, no. 1 (Autumn 2008): 44–45.

74 Blaxland, "Army and Government Objectives," 291.

By 2004, it was apparent to the Chief of Army Lieutenant General Peter Leahy that “too much of the burden” during recent operations was falling on a small portion of the ADF, in particular the Special Forces.⁷⁵ Their operating tempo was high, their wider responsibilities (which included domestic counterterrorism) equally taxing, and their numbers finite. Yet in 2005, they were again sent to Afghanistan. As discussed above, with the exception of a brief period during 2006 and 2007 when the ADF’s senior leadership had been convinced they needed a rest, the Special Forces were constantly deployed in Uruzgan for the remainder of the war. Twenty Special Forces deployments between 2005 and 2014 largely fell to the Special Air Service Regiment and what became 2nd Commando Regiment. The bulk of two deployments were undertaken by the Army Reserve-heavy 1st Commando Regiment.

It is not uncommon to hear of these soldiers doing more than half a dozen tours.⁷⁶ The implications of multiple deployments to a high-stress, high-threat environment, with the attendant constant exposure to the horrors of war, for those soldiers and their families is another theme that appears to be under investigation at the moment. Only time will tell.

Like concerns about overuse, the view that Special Forces were misused in Afghanistan is not new. Indeed, a 2008 article in the *Australian Army Journal* complained that rather than reserving Special Forces for missions of strategic importance, the ADF was using them in conventional infantry missions with tactical outcomes.⁷⁷ The result was deep frustration within the wider Australian Army, especially among the ranks of the infantry, that the infantry was seen as “a distant second choice for combat operations behind the Special Operations Forces.”⁷⁸

This frustration could also be felt among Dutch and Australian commanders who, despite owning the area of operations and being accountable for the success of the mission inside it, were rarely consulted and often unaware of what the Special Forces were doing. Such a lack of cooperation is worrisome when one considers the Special Operations Task Group’s main purpose was to create and to maintain conditions that allowed Task Force Uruzgan, and its Australian component, to perform its functions. Lastly, there is also the fact of stress and pressure on the units of Special Operations Command. It is evident some of the overuse discussed above could have been avoided if more of these combat missions had been given to the broader army.

It would be foolish to think the Special Forces will not be one of the first options governments consider whenever war is on the table. It would also be incorrect to conclude there was no place for Australian Special Forces in Afghanistan. Many tasks they performed were appropriate, such as long-range reconnaissance, clandestine operations,

75 David Beaumont, “Logistics and the Failure to Modernise,” in Frame and Palazzo, *On Ops*, 152.

76 Masters, *No Front Line*.

77 Hammett, “We Were Soldiers,” 41.

78 Hammett, “We Were Soldiers,” 40.

and intelligence-led precision targeting against significant insurgent leaders. There is also the reality that in the world of special operations forces, elite units tend to want to work solely alongside of and share information with other elite units.⁷⁹ Despite these factors, the lessons for the government and their ADF advisers should be to pause and consider long-term ramifications for elite units and the wider Australian Defence Force before committing Special Forces to war. It should also ask whether Special Forces are the right choice for the task required.

Conclusion

A short article like this cannot do justice to the complicated and nuanced story of Australia's contribution to the Afghanistan War. It can, however, provide readers with a contextualized account of that commitment and present insights into coalition partner considerations in a war of choice. It has also not attempted to identify or discuss all of the many lessons stemming from that experience. Indeed, the *Official History of Australian Operations in Afghanistan*, currently being written with access to classified records, will have nearly one million words to canvass such issues across political, strategic, operational, tactical, institutional, and interagency divides.

That historical project, however, is still many years from completion.⁸⁰ Awaiting its detailed analysis before attempting to identify lessons, adapt, and implement change, accordingly risks, as Albert Palazzo wrote, deferring institutional learning and losing the contest for ideas. Yet this is precisely what has happened within the Australian Defence Force above the tactical level. This reality provides the first lesson for Australia: it must actively implement formal mechanisms to capture the lessons of Afghanistan and adapt at all levels and across all arms of government. It cannot afford to have those lessons confined solely to the realm of informal corporate knowledge, where it risks evaporating as senior public servants and military officers retire.

By focusing on three key lessons arising from Australia's war in Afghanistan, this article has provided a starting point for Australian policymakers and practitioners. Afghanistan highlighted the importance of development and governance to any counterinsurgency effort. Consideration, therefore, should be given to implementing a whole-of-government strategy—paired with an interagency effort on the ground—early in any future Australian commitment.

So, too, should policymakers and military practitioners realize the benefits that accrue from a highly selective embed program. Such a strategy should be maintained in times of peace and war. It must, however, be balanced against the needs and wants of coalition partners,

79 Ian Langford, "Australian Special Forces in Afghanistan: Supporting Australia in the 'Long War'?" *Australian Army Journal* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 2010): 24–25.

80 "Official Histories—Iraq, Afghanistan & East Timor," Australian War Memorial, accessed November 7, 2019.

Australian national interests, and the propensity to deploy embeds at the expense of—rather than in addition to—ground forces.

Finally, careful thought should be given to the government's default position that Special Forces are the force of choice for such missions. The constant rotation of ADF Special Forces units through Afghanistan invariably strained a finite, strategic asset. Greater consideration should therefore be given to the institutional and individual impact of deploying Special Forces when another force element might suffice. This is as true for preserving the capabilities of the Special Operations Command as it is for developing those of the wider Australian Defence Force.

STRATEGIC LIEUTENANTS

Educating Strategic Lieutenants at West Point

Scott A. Silverstone

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ABSTRACT: This article argues West Point responded to the changing strategic environment from the end of the Cold War through the post-9/11 period by innovating its curriculum. Over the past several decades, however, the academy's educational model has remained remarkably stable, rooted in an enduring commitment to a rigorous liberal education as the best preparation for officers confronting the inherent uncertainties of future wars.

The United States Military Academy has been developing commissioned officers for the US Army since the academy's founding in 1802. While the objective has always been to produce second lieutenants prepared for a career in uniform, West Point's approach to its leader development mission has changed dramatically over the past two centuries, and much of that story has been told elsewhere.¹ This article focuses on the decades since the end of the Cold War, a period of profound shifts in the strategic landscape, and the changing expectations at home about the strategic problems our military leaders must be prepared to tackle. As a result of these factors, the past three decades have been marked by deep reflection among academy leaders over whether the curriculum is adequately preparing our cadets for the professional demands placed on their shoulders after graduation.

This article emerged from a joint project that began in 2015 among a group of faculty members from different North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military academies who met periodically to discuss their respective academic curricula. Our initial goal was to share best practices for officer education at the precommissioning level. Even though our graduates have been working together in Afghanistan for years, and they share a stake in NATO's reinvigorated focus on territorial defense after Russia's annexation of Crimea, each academy knew very little about how its counterparts were preparing young officers for service, particularly in collective security initiatives.

Over the course of numerous meetings, we identified profound differences in how NATO members approach this task. This discovery led to a new set of comparative questions for discussion. First, how have changes in the international strategic context since the end of the Cold War shaped each academy's educational model, if at all? Second, how

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1 Lance Betros, *West Point: Two Centuries and Beyond* (Abilene, TX: State House Press, 2004); and Lance Betros, *Carved from Granite: West Point since 1902* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2012).

has the domestic political context of each member state shaped the way its military academies responded to the changing security environment?

This article contributes to the larger comparative study of strategic context and NATO military academies, and it addresses these questions for the United States Military Academy (USMA). This analysis is not the official position of the USMA, but rather my personal assessment after nearly two decades on the faculty. My goal is to pull back the curtain a bit to explain how this institution has wrestled with the fundamental questions of educating future US Army officers within a broader domestic and international strategic setting.

The article focuses on the impact of changes in the global distribution of power at the end of the Cold War that created new opportunities American leaders sought to exploit and the changing perceptions of the twenty-first century threat environment. Together, these threats and opportunities invariably expanded the mission of the US Army and forced USMA leadership to confront a central question: What capabilities do graduates need to carry into the field? Real-world events, including the Persian Gulf War and the subsequent focus on preparedness to fight major regional conflicts, in Korea and the Middle East; humanitarian intervention in cases like Somalia and Kosovo; nation-building and counterinsurgency missions in Afghanistan and Iraq; and a renewed emphasis on readiness for high-intensity conflict against near-peer competitors such as Russia and China, suggest the answer to this question is simply “more.”

Further, domestic sentiment, favoring an activist foreign policy and continued investments in America’s global reach, created a strategic culture that encouraged expanding the capabilities of the US Army. This article pulls these elements of strategic context together to explain the academy’s response to the most basic questions of education and leader development in recent decades. In the end, it shows that despite changes in the international environment and in Army operations, West Point’s educational model has remained remarkably stable, rooted in an enduring commitment to a rigorous liberal education as the best preparation for a career of service as a US Army officer.

America’s Strategic Context

We begin our assessment of America’s strategic context by bluntly acknowledging a few, perhaps obvious, facts: among the 29 member states within the NATO Alliance, America stands out in several ways—its power, its geography, and its self-defined role in the international system. While the United States and Canada share strategic benefits offered by geographic separation from most of the world’s hot spots, the magnitude and global reach of American economic and military power in support of its enduring, post-World War II interests puts the United States in a unique strategic position relative to its NATO partners.

America’s distinctive strategic context, characterized by the relationship between its power and its geography and its strategic culture,

directly influences the USMA program. Scholars have been working with the concept of strategic culture for decades, highlighting how ideas, identities, “patterns of habitual behavior,” assumptions about the way the world works, and assumptions about “what strategic choices are the most efficacious,” shape the decisions states make.² Thomas Berger defined “political-military culture” as the ideas and identities that shape “how members of a given society view national security, the military as an institution, and the use of force in international relations.”³ In the United States, a distinctive strategic culture gives purpose to its great power, and in turn reinforces military and economic investment in sustaining that great power while geography creates the conditions for many of the operational features of American power abroad.

The key ideas and identities that constitute America’s strategic culture can be summarized through a few statements that reflect a deeply engrained and widely shared perspective on national security:

- Despite the continental scale of its landmass and its rich natural resource base, American prosperity, and the national strength that prosperity makes possible, depend on unfettered access to key regions of the world, primarily western Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East.
- Historically, America’s political leadership has been highly sensitive to perceived security threats in distant lands that could be projected to the American homeland or disrupt access to key geographic regions in other parts of the world.
- Power projection with forward-deployed military forces makes it possible to defuse, deter, or defend against these threats at great distances from American territory, thereby greatly reducing the risks to American interests.
- America as an uncontested leader in multilateral political, economic, and military endeavors is a core identity, but not a guaranteed state of affairs for the twenty-first century.
- Historically, Americans have seen themselves as problem solvers, willing and able to take on the challenges many states cannot, or are not willing to, take on without US leadership or assistance.

The roots of contemporary American strategic culture are found in the early twentieth century, as the pressures of a changing international system made it impossible for the United States to maintain the largely isolationist grand strategy it had pursued since the founding. After suffering through the pain of the Great Depression and being drawn into World War II, American leaders increasingly came to believe fixing the problems that had spawned such a violent period in human history was essential for securing future American interests. In essence, if the United

2 Alastair Iain Johnston, “Thinking about Strategic Culture,” *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995): 36, 46.

3 Thomas U. Berger, “Norms, Identity, and National Security in Germany and Japan” in *The Culture of National Security*, ed. Peter J. Katzenstein (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 325–26.

States could not remain detached from the dangerous dysfunctions of the old world order, then it had no choice but to transform the character of political, economic, and security relationships within the international system into a more congenial environment. John Ikenberry describes this new world order as an open order that allowed for liberal trade across continents, a friendly order free from hostile revisionist states, and a stable order in which institutions help facilitate cooperation across multiple issue areas.⁴

The Cold War helped cement this new strategic perspective and America's emerging identity as a global leader. This emergent globalist, problem-solving impulse was evident in 1950 in the most important strategic document of the early Cold War. National Security Council Report 68, which contains an alarming assessment of the Soviet threat, evaluated the strategic options available in response and presented a strong case for containment as the only viable way to confront the new threat environment. But in a largely overlooked passage, NSC 68 distinguished containment from what it called "our overall policy," which can "be described as one designed to foster a world environment in which the American system can survive and flourish." While containment was one "subsidiary" element, NSC 68 declared "the policy of striving to develop a healthy international community is the long-term constructive effort which we are engaged in." And it was an effort America would "probably pursue even if there were no Soviet threat."⁵ President John F. Kennedy captured this global problem-solving spirit and what it meant for America's Army officers during his West Point commencement speech in June 1962:

Whatever your position, the scope of your decisions will not be confined to the traditional tenets of military competence and training. . . . The nonmilitary problems which you will face will also be most demanding—diplomatic, political and economic. . . . You will need to know and understand not only the foreign policy of the United States, but the foreign policy of all countries scattered around the world who 20 years ago were the most distant names to us.⁶

Perhaps the best evidence these strategic ideas and this identity had become deeply embedded in the political fabric of the United States came with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. There was great enthusiasm in the early 1990s for reaping the benefits of a so-called peace dividend, the potential for significant reductions in the costs of global leadership made possible by a dramatic decline in the Soviet threat. But the end of the Cold War did not lead to a wholesale drawdown of America's global commitments. Instead, American leaders quickly pivoted on the axis of US strategic culture to engage new threats and embrace new opportunities

4 G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 166.

5 National Security Council, *United States Objectives and Programs for National Security*, National Security Council Report 68 (NSC 68) (Washington, DC: NSC, April 14, 1950), sec. VI a.

6 John F. Kennedy, "Remarks to the Graduating Class of the U.S. Military Academy, West Point, New York, 6 June 1962" (speech, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, June 6, 1962).

to exercise leadership “abroad, in search of monsters to destroy.”⁷ The absence of a peer competitor simply broadened the geographic scope for extending American influence and ambitions. A draft version of the Bush administration’s 1992 Defense Planning Guidance, for example, bluntly called for sustaining a one-superpower-world to prevent allies like Germany and Japan from challenging America’s leadership of the existing order, extending America’s European defense commitments further eastward to include former Warsaw Pact nations, and stopping the spread of nuclear weapons by such states as Iraq, North Korea, India, and Pakistan.⁸ Less than a year later President George H. W. Bush delivered his farewell address to the cadets at West Point. In it, he acknowledged,

The United States should not seek to be the world’s policeman. . . . But in the wake of the cold war, in a world where we are the only remaining superpower, it is the role of the United States to marshal its moral and material resources to promote a democratic peace. It is our responsibility, it is our opportunity to lead. . . . Our objective must be to exploit [this] unparalleled opportunity . . . to work toward transforming this new world into a new world order, one of governments that are democratic, tolerant, and economically free at home and committed abroad to settling inevitable differences peacefully, without the threat or use of force.⁹

When Bush delivered this speech in January 1993, American forces had been in Somalia for just one month, executing the first major humanitarian relief mission of the post-Cold War period. President Bill Clinton quickly embraced this general trend of expanding America’s global commitments such as promoting democracy and market economies, deterring states that might oppose these trends; promoting the liberalization of these same states, and advancing a humanitarian agenda.¹⁰

Over the years, public support for American engagement abroad has certainly had its highs and its lows. And during the 2016 presidential election, Donald Trump successfully tapped into a more restrictive view of US military and diplomatic intervention abroad held by a percentage of American voters. But despite President Trump’s challenge to long-standing beliefs about America’s role in the world, the general consensus on American global engagement, particularly among elites, has been resilient. This consensus is clearly reinforced by enduring support within the broader national security community, and by the leadership of the Department of Defense and the US Army, which expects America’s military forces to be fully prepared to sustain global commitments and grapple with a wide range of problems in all regions of the world. In

7 John Quincy Adams, “An Address to Congress” (speech, United States Congress, Washington, DC, July 4, 1821).

8 Patrick E. Tyler, “U.S. Strategy Plan Calls for Ensuring no Rivals Develop,” *New York Times*, March 8, 1992.

9 George H. W. Bush, “Address at West Point” (speech, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, January 5, 1993).

10 Anthony Lake, “From Containment to Enlargement,” (speech, School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, September 21, 1993).

this broader story, NATO clearly remains a top priority for the United States. But the Alliance is just one part of a larger global picture that keeps American leaders focused on multiple priorities.

While this relatively stable strategic culture has sustained basic expectations that America's Army and its officers must be prepared to engage globally on behalf of America's diverse strategic objectives, expectations for the specific types of problems they must confront have changed since the late 1980s. Changing expectations have followed shifts in the global power structure, America's problem-solving ambitions, and the character of threats that have flared and receded over time. Taken together, these variables provide tremendous insight into how the leadership and the faculty at West Point have thought about the academy's program for developing each class of new second lieutenants.

West Point's Adaptation

In many ways, West Point now resembles a typical four-year American undergraduate academic institution, with a core curriculum and academic majors that result in each graduate being awarded a bachelor of science degree. Military and physical development programs are woven throughout the cadet experience, as is a character-building program designed to develop ethically grounded leadership. For much of the post-World War II era, and into the 1980s, the West Point curriculum remained relatively stable. All cadets took the same set of courses, with just a few elective options introduced in the 1970s, while much of the core curriculum reflected the legacy of West Point's distinction as the first engineering school in the United States. While cadets could select fields of study or academic majors by the mid-1980s, the intellectual experience for every cadet was highly standardized with academic majors not becoming a graduation requirement until 2005.

As the Cold War was winding down, two external sources of pressure forced the academy's leaders to think more critically about cadet education. Abroad, the Persian Gulf War and the Somalia intervention demonstrated in rapid succession just how broad an Army officer's professional skill set needed to be. The Persian Gulf War was a victory for the post-Vietnam US Army. It provided dramatic, made-for-television proof American prowess in the realm of high-intensity conflict was unmatched. Through the 1990s, American defense priorities and force structure remained anchored in the threat of renewed conflict against Iraq or Iran in southwest Asia and in the enduring potential for war on the Korean peninsula.

Readiness for large-scale conventional combat operations in these two major regional conflicts, and perhaps fighting them nearly simultaneously, supported the notion that continuity in officer education was necessary despite the end of the Soviet threat.¹¹ And the Gulf War victory could be read as indisputable confirmation the

¹¹ John M. Shalikashvili, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, 1995 (Washington DC: Department of Defense, 1995), ii.

Army's programs for developing combat leaders were getting the job done. On the other hand, Somalia and the string of messier post-Cold War military interventions that followed in other places, convinced many that American military leaders had to develop a much broader range of competencies, beyond the capabilities needed to prevail in conventional warfare.

At home, a 1989 review by a reaccreditation team from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education set the stage for a fresh look at West Point's educational model. In a blunt finding, the commission's assessment team asserted "the institution lacked any discernible justification to describe why students were required to complete a particular set of courses." According to one academy official responsible for addressing this finding, "We . . . leveraged this accreditation concern to transform the West Point experience."¹²

By the late 1990s, the guiding document for West Point's academic program, aptly titled *Educating Future Army Officers for a Changing World* (known locally by the gangly acronym EFAOCW), reflected the changing missions—in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti, and Kosovo—that were redefining the very purpose of America's armed forces. In a way, this document was another manifestation of America's deepening strategic culture embracing with evermore enthusiasm the notion of America's natural role in the world as liberal hegemon. America the problem solver was, in Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's words, the "indispensable nation," a force for progress destined to shape the international system and repair broken states that were sprouting up in greater numbers as the decade wore on.¹³ And with this embrace of liberal hegemony in a one-superpower-world came the belief, as articulated in EFAOCW, America's Army officers must be prepared "to anticipate and respond effectively to the uncertainties of a changing technological, social, political, and economic world."¹⁴

It is fair to point out technological, social, political, and economic change was not a historical phenomenon introduced by the 1990s. But the pace and the scale of the changes occurring in this decade, along with America's expanding strategic ambitions, begged West Point's leaders to reconsider the right education for future officers who would be ordered to take on missions, to serve highly complex strategic objectives in complex political and social settings, and to apply a rapidly evolving set of technological tools. The EFAOCW answered this question by reaffirming the value of a liberal education at the core of the cadet experience, rather than tailoring cadet education to meet the specific needs of peace enforcement or nation-building missions

12 Bruce Keith, "The Transformation of West Point as a Liberal Arts College," *Association of American Colleges & Universities* 96, no. 2 (Spring 2010). See also G. B. Forsythe and B. Keith, "The Evolving USMA Academic Curriculum: 1952–2002," in *West Point: Two Centuries and Beyond*, ed. Lance Betros (West Point, NY: 2004), 370–89.

13 "Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, Interview on NBC-TV 'The Today Show' with Matt Lauer," U.S. Department of State, February 19, 1998.

14 United States Military Academy (USMA), *Educating Future Army Officers for a Changing World* (West Point, NY: USMA, 2002), 6.

that American political leaders embraced in this decade. As the larger Army was debating, and introducing, changes in force structure and training to prepare and equip soldiers for these unique tasks, West Point was recommitting to an educational model better suited for complex and ambiguous problems.¹⁵ This effort sought to develop critical and creative thinking skills that could be applied to whatever specific tasks its graduates would face in the years to come.

The academy's commitment was reflected in the rigorous, standardized core curriculum that cut broadly across the sciences, humanities, and social sciences and remained a requirement for every cadet. But the academy also introduced diverse academic majors and concentration fields to the curriculum. The idea was to harness the benefits of disciplinary depth as part of the academic experience, which would not only diversify the academic backgrounds available within each graduating class, but also help stimulate deep learning, rather than just broad learning. The intent was to inspire a commitment to lifelong learning that comes from intellectual exploration of a field the individual cadet found most interesting.

This broad liberal education aligned with the advice offered by Sir Michael Howard, one of the preeminent military historians of the twentieth century, in a lecture he delivered in 1961. As Howard noted, "Wars are not tactical exercises writ large. They are . . . conflicts of societies." While the military-technical aspects of warfare are essential components of military expertise, as the *Army Profession* doctrine asserts, Howard emphasized, "The roots of victory and defeat often have to be sought far from the battlefield, in political, social, and economic factors." As a result, he argues, military professionals "must study war in context."¹⁶ H. R. McMaster expanded on this point by arguing any use of military force must be "understood in [its] social, cultural, economic, human, moral, political, and psychological contexts." And these fields must be part of every cadet's education.¹⁷ This appreciation for studying the context of the deployment of military armed force reflects the three other domains of military expertise in the Army profession: political-cultural, moral-ethical, and human-leader development.¹⁸

Long Wars' Impact

Despite the firm commitment to liberal education already in place as the academy entered the twenty-first century, its self-conscious link to

15 Nina M. Serafino, *Peacekeeping and Related Stability Operations: Issues of U.S. Military Involvement*, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report RL33557 (Washington, DC: CRS, January 24, 2007).

16 Michael Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," *Parameters* 11, no. 1 (1981): 14 (italics in original).

17 H. R. McMaster, "The Need for a Coherent Interdisciplinary Approach to the Study of War and Warfare at West Point" (unpublished paper, 2012), 2. Also see H. R. McMaster, "Thinking Clearly about War and the Future of Warfare," introduction to *US Army Operating Concept: Winning in a Complex World*, by Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1 (Washington, DC: HQDA, October 31, 2014), 9.

18 See HQDA, *The Army Profession*, Army Doctrine Reference Publication 1 (ADRP 1) (Washington, DC: HQDA, 2015).

the new kinds of missions young leaders were confronting in the post-Cold War world, Afghanistan and Iraq rattled the confidence of many at West Point. The interventions of the 1990s were a poor comparison to what the academy's graduates faced at the turn of the century. Previous missions had relatively small footprints, few resources were devoted to the problems, and they were of short duration and limited ambition.

Afghanistan and Iraq became all-consuming problems at the center of American foreign policy for years on end. In each case, young officers were given increasingly more complex counterinsurgency and nation-building missions, tasked to pursue immensely more ambitious strategic goals that included, at least initially, nothing less than the wholesale political, social, and economic transformation of these foreign lands. In turn, junior officers had to grapple with a complicated mixture of political, social, cultural, and economic variables affecting the behavior of adversaries, allies, and neutral actors alike. And to be effective, Army officers had to figure out how to manipulate these variables to achieve the strategic goals set by higher policy—and do so without simply resorting to the brute force at their disposal.

As the 2007 version of EFAOCW declared,

The intellectual demands placed on the modern Army officer are unprecedented in our history. Today, more than previously, our graduates must deal with complex technologies, rapidly developing situations in complicated multicultural scenarios, and a host of non-traditional missions that demand innovative solutions. This reality requires graduates to be informed, responsible, self-directed learners who can anticipate and respond effectively to challenges that we can predict only imperfectly today.¹⁹

But was West Point actually offering an adequate program to help our graduates manage the tasks they were given in these two post-9/11 operations? As the Army's strategic challenges in Afghanistan and Iraq mounted, recent graduates and former academy instructors launched a steady stream of feedback on the nature of these missions to faculty and staff at West Point. And it seemed the existing developmental program might not meet the exacting demands of strategic thinking and action the young officers were being expected to exercise.

The Army's formal endorsement of mission command—"the exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations"—in 2013 reinforced the imperative to ensure academy graduates were prepared to take on these tasks.²⁰ In introductory remarks, then US Army Chief of Staff General Raymond T. Odierno observed this concept was implemented out of operational necessity in Afghanistan and Iraq. It was then codified as a formal leadership philosophy with significant implications for leader development, unit training, and warfighting.

19 USMA, *Educating Future Army Officers for a Changing World* (West Point, NY: USMA, 2007), 1.

20 HQDA, *U.S. Army Mission Command Strategy FY 13-19* (Washington, DC: HQDA, 2013), ii.

Army leaders have since recognized widespread adoption of the mission command philosophy require a cultural shift because commanders must “become comfortable with *decentralizing control* in order to foster *initiative* and *adaptation* by allowing subordinates the greatest freedom of action in *determining how best to accomplish the mission*.”²¹ To make this concept work, it is critical commanders have confidence in decentralization of control. They must be convinced it will not lead to disaster. But more importantly, they must be convinced junior officers have the intellectual competence across the fields of military expertise to deserve to be granted the authority to exercise initiative and adapt operations to best achieve strategic ends. *The US Army’s Operating Concept* of 2014 explained effectiveness depends on the ability to innovate under conditions of ambiguity and “innovation is the result of critical and creative thinking and the conversion of new ideas into valued outcomes. Innovation drives the development of new tools or methods that permit Army forces to anticipate future demands, stay ahead of determined enemies, and accomplish the mission.”²²

Understandably, the feedback from officers in the field inspired a range of initiatives at West Point to fill the perceived gaps in the cadet experience before their first deployments. The faculty and staff engaged in drawn-out debates about cultural literacy and language training. Programs to cultivate diplomatic and negotiation skills and increase cadet exposure to the political and economic problems associated with counterinsurgency and nation-building operations were introduced. Academic departments added more language classes and new elective courses tailored to the changing missions. Additionally, summer military training now included role-playing scenarios meant to replicate the peace enforcement and counterinsurgency problems the cadets would face as officers in the field. The number of cadets sent to foreign universities for a semester abroad swelled after the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Hundreds of cadets were sent abroad for cultural immersion experiences each summer to learn and to work with diverse local communities in Africa, Southeast Asia, central Asia, and Latin America.

As these piecemeal initiatives accumulated, by 2013 the dean of the academic board decided it was time for a comprehensive review of the academic curriculum, the first since the 1980s. The goal was to ensure the academy was keeping up with best practices in higher education and producing the flexible and adaptive leaders needed to work toward the complex strategic objectives of post-9/11 operations. But even as this review was underway, the strategic environment continued to change dramatically. In August 2010, President Barack Obama declared America’s combat mission in Iraq had ended. And by December 2011, the last American troops serving in Iraq were home, meeting the withdrawal deadline negotiated by President George W. Bush in 2008. Likewise, the American forces who had surged into Afghanistan during

21 HQDA, *Mission Command Strategy*, 4 (emphasis added).

22 TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, 20.

2010, gradually transitioned from a large, direct combat mission to a small force serving primarily as advisors for Afghan security forces.

Russia's seizure of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 sparked an eastward push for NATO that resulted in new roles for American forces. Army offers rotated through many of the newest, post-Cold War NATO member states, participating in presence missions and exercises that until recently had seemed like a relic of Cold War history. American priorities signaled a stark shift in December 2017 with the release of President Trump's *National Security Strategy*, which stated bluntly that readiness to deter and fight near-peer competitors, rather than counterinsurgency, was now the most important task for the American military. When the long-standoff on the Korean peninsula flared dangerously in 2017, Army leaders once again designated high-intensity land warfare as the top priority and the lethality of US forces the most important measure of readiness.

Back at West Point, which continued to deliver about 1,000 new second lieutenants to the Army every year, the comprehensive curriculum review came to an end, and the discussion of the value of a rigorous, broad liberal education had come full circle. The core curriculum was adjusted in places, the academic goals were refined, and additional elements were added to the cadet experience for the class of 2019 and beyond. But completing the process, the academy's leaders had reaffirmed one essential claim: a rigorous, broad liberal education is the best preparation for officers serving in an inherently uncertain future, on any mission, and in any part of the world.

The Future's Complexity

Eighteen years after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 sparked the initial invasion of Afghanistan, West Point has moved beyond worrying about the distinct demands of counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and nation building, and how the responses to these types of operations must shape the curriculum. The vision for the academic program released in June 2018, *Educating Army Leaders*, recognizes the reality that flows from America's strategic culture. As long as Americans see themselves as forward-engaged problem solvers with diverse global interests, "the roles, responsibilities, and missions of the Army [will] continually shift, requiring graduates to have deep disciplinary knowledge as well as the agility and imagination to work in a variety of venues and across any number of disciplines."²³ But beyond reaffirming the importance of a broad liberal education that "teaches cadets how to think about problems in varied and adaptive ways as they learn to navigate and succeed in an increasingly complex world," West Point as an institution continues to lean forward with an emphasis on innovation, both by its faculty and its cadets.²⁴ The curriculum increasingly emphasizes independent student research and an enhanced

23 USMA, *Educating Army Leaders: Developing Intellect and Character to Navigate a Diverse and Dynamic World* (West Point, NY: USMA, 2018), ii.

24 USMA, *Educating Army Leaders*, 13.

writing program, along with new threads that tie several courses together on the study of war, region-culture, and gender, sexuality, and respect. Moreover, West Point is now home to the Army Cyber Institute, and the academy more broadly supports cadets preparing to join the Army's new cyber branch. The capstone MX400 Officership Course is now formally embedded in the core curriculum and includes a new "Integrative Challenge" designed to give cadet teams complex problems to solve that depend on their ability to draw from across the academic program, and across other aspects of the West Point experience as well, just as they will be expected to do as military officers grappling with the complex challenges of an unpredictable future.²⁵

25 USMA, *Educating Army Leaders*, 15.

Educating Strategic Lieutenants at Sandhurst

An Jacobs

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ABSTRACT: This article examines how well military education at the Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst delivers lieutenants capable of coping with the complexities of their operational environment and the strategic implications of their decisions.

In the late 1990s, US Marine Corps General Charles C. Krulak introduced the concept of the “strategic corporal,” which emphasized the idea that even lower-level military leaders must be mindful of the possible strategic implications of tactical and operational decisions.¹ Krulak maintained militaries in post-Cold War operations had to be prepared to engage in full-scale military interventions, peacekeeping operations, and humanitarian aid missions. In complex and fluid operating environments, waiting for orders from higher up the chain of command could jeopardize time-critical decision-making and negatively impact operational outcomes.

Krulak’s strategic corporal concept led to a shift among Western militaries on the subject of strategic thinking. Increasingly, leadership responsibilities were transferred down the chain of command, even to the level of corporal. Fostering strategic thinking at the lower levels of command presents threats and opportunities, but also calls for training and education beyond traditional soldiering skills.²

Building on the notion of the strategic corporal, this article explores the concept of the strategic lieutenant and asks to what extent military education for young officers reflects new strategic and operational realities. Specifically, it examines whether the British Royal Military Academy of Sandhurst (RMAS) produces strategic-minded officers. The RMAS Commissioning Course aims to train and educate officer cadets to become strategic lieutenants imbued with a substantial amount of knowledge and understanding of the complexities of an ever-changing operational environment. The academy’s applied learning approach to military education represents an integrated model of military training and education and aims to enhance the strategic mindedness of young British Army officers.

The aim of this article is threefold. First, it explores the extent to which key changes in Britain’s strategic context since the end of the Cold

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1 Charles C. Krulak, “The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War,” *Marines Magazine*, January 1999.

2 Johan W. J. Lammers, “Commanding the Strategic Corporal” (working paper, Department of War Studies, King’s College London, December 2016).

War are reflected in Britain's military educational programs for young officer cadets. As the article demonstrates, lessons learned from recent operational deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan have been among the key drivers for change, and have helped fuel the enhanced focus on education in the professional development of young officers.

Second, this article addresses the specific educational model Sandhurst applies to enhance strategic mindedness in British Army officers and considers some challenges this model represents. It explains how RMAS prepares strategic lieutenants through blended learning—an integrated approach to training and education, where classroom learning is put into practice and applied in exercises. The yearlong Commissioning Course is augmented by extended academic learning through the recently launched Army Higher Education Pathway (AHEP), a mechanism to optimize officers' professional development during the first stages of their career.

Third, this article takes a first step toward measuring the effectiveness of the Sandhurst model in educating strategic lieutenants, while also considering the difficulties of evaluating educational outcomes.

Strategic Context

The British strategic context since the end of the Cold War has witnessed both continuity and change. Immediately after the end of the Cold War, *Options for Change*, the 1991 defense review, used the “peace dividend” as an opportunity to cut defense spending from 4.1 percent to 2.4 percent of the gross domestic product.³ Despite concerns the proposed cuts lacked strategic vision and excessively limited operational capability, especially following the Persian Gulf War, the focus on downward budget pressure preoccupied the minds of government leaders led by Margaret Thatcher and John Major.⁴

When the Labour Party took office in 1997, it committed to a new defense review, which reflected the refusal to give up capabilities and the desire to remain prepared for all eventualities in an uncertain and unpredictable security environment.⁵ While the Franco-British St. Malo declaration (1998) demonstrated more continuity than change and an enduring preference for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Labour Party added the “force for good” element to Britain's traditional foreign policy ambitions, embodying a liberal interventionist approach under the banner of intervening for the global good.⁶

3 International Security Information Service (ISIS), *Options for Change: The UK Defence Review, 1990–1991*, no. 21 (Brussels: ISIS, 1991).

4 Timothy Garden and David Ramsbotham, “About Face—The British Armed Forces, Which Way to Turn?” *RUSI Journal* 149, no. 2 (2004); and Mitch Mitchell, *Decline, and Fall? The Influence of Military Thinking on Britain's Strategic Culture*, Seaford House Papers (London: Royal College of Defense Studies, 2013).

5 Ministry of Defense (MOD), *Strategic Defence Review*, Command Paper 3999 (London: MOD, 1998).

6 Mitchell, *Decline and Fall?*; and MOD, *Strategic Defence Review*.

The global ambitions and responsibilities resulting from such an approach soon became visible in deployments in Kosovo, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, and Iraq.⁷ Yet, the reputation of the British Army was dented somewhat as a result of experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. Substantial human and financial costs combined with limited operational successes caused domestic public support and political appetite for British deployments to wane, seemingly leading to the end of the “era of interventionism.”⁸

When the Cameron government took office in 2010, questionable levels of success in Iraq and Afghanistan had already left their mark. Cameron proposed a foreign policy based on national priorities, economic interests, and rationality; however, this instrumentalist approach was criticized as a mismatch between ambitions and resources.⁹ Indeed, while public opinion and political appetite for deployments had decreased, global ambitions and the global threat picture had not. Accordingly, the 2015 defense review emphasized threats facing Britain were larger, more diverse, and more complex, thus requiring greater resourcing.¹⁰

Today, the British government is confronted with a list of daunting challenges: balancing a shrinking defense budget with global foreign policy ambitions, dealing with the challenges of “Brexit” negotiations and related uncertainties, reassessing the meaning of the “Special Relationship” with the United States under the Trump administration, and ensuring preparedness for the Russian threat. Indeed, General Nicholas P. Carter, then chief of the general staff, in January 2018 described Russia as the biggest “state-based threat to [the UK] since the end of the Cold War,” and the “most complex and capable security challenge.”¹¹ As a result of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s increasing assertiveness, the shift in British foreign policy away from deployment to armed conflicts overseas never materialized.¹²

Despite foreign policy shifts and changes in the nature of global conflict following the end of the Cold War, Britain’s role in the wider strategic context in which it operates has seen more continuity than

7 Adrian L. Johnson, ed., *Wars in Peace: British Military Operations since 1991* (London: Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies and Security Studies, 2014).

8 Frank Ledwidge, *Losing Small Wars: British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011); and Johnson, *Wars in Peace*.

9 Office of the Prime Minister, *A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy*, Command Paper 7953 (London: Office of the Prime Minister, 2010); and House of Commons, *The Strategic Defence and Security Review and the National Security Strategy: Sixth Report of Session 2010–12*, H.C. Rep. No. 761 (2011).

10 Office of the Prime Minister, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, Command Paper 9161 (London: Office of the Prime Minister, 2015).

11 Nick Carter, “General Nick Carter: Dynamic Security Threats and the British Army,” RUSI, streamed live on January 22, 2018, YouTube video, 1:10:15. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1O6NswL4iA>

12 Matthew Ford, “Influence Without Power? Reframing British Concepts of Military Intervention after 10 Years of Counterinsurgency,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 25, no. 3 (2014): 495–500; United Kingdom (UK) Department for International Development, UK MOD, and UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *Building Stability Overseas Strategy* (London: MOD, 2011); and MOD, *International Defence Engagement Strategy* (London: MOD, 2013).

change, and long-standing traditions remain prominent in British strategic thinking. At the forefront of these traditions are Britain's self-identification as a country that endeavors to continue playing a powerful role in the world with a high level of ambition to exert global influence and with a security and defense policy predominantly aligned with and through NATO and alongside the United States. Nevertheless, Britain had to reflect on its role in a changing international context, and how best to educate its young officers to operate effectively within it.

Educational Adaptation

At Sandhurst, program adjustments can materialize through formal, informal, academic, and military channels. Lessons learned and suggestions for change may come top down, bottom up, or sideways, making it a flexible system that allows for an inclusive approach.¹³ The implementation of changes, however, may take time to materialize and to be reflected in the Sandhurst educational program.

Formal change processes can start as high as the defense secretary or cascade down via the chief of the general staff, the Capabilities Branch, and the Department for Personnel (DEPERS). Within DEPERS, the Individual Development Branch sets the standards for individual officer development throughout an Army career, and more specifically, the standards on training requirements are set by the Training Requirements Authority.¹⁴ The Sandhurst Group then translates these requirements into a program of education and training through the Training Delivery Authority.¹⁵

Sandhurst leadership is responsible for the specifics of course programming and educational requirements, and the faculty has substantial flexibility to design courses while ensuring compatibility with military training.¹⁶ The course may also undergo adaptation as a result of suggestions made by RMAS senior (military and civilian) management, higher ranks of the Field Army, subject matter experts in the relevant academic departments, and officers returning from operational deployments. In practice, all staff members associated with the educational program at Sandhurst monitor wider developments and trends and suggest changes when deemed appropriate.

An historical assessment of the changes in military education at Sandhurst since the 1970s demonstrates the recent culmination of a trend toward an enhanced focus on academic study and reflects some lessons learned from recent military operations. The Cold War period witnessed two landmark changes in the approach to officer education. In the early 1980s, three academic departments were established: political and social studies, war studies and international affairs, and the communications department. The establishment of these departments reflected changes

13 Interview 4. 2017. Staff Member RMAS, November 27, 2017.

14 Interview 1. 2017. Staff Member RMAS, September 21, 2017.

15 Interview 2. 2017. Staff Member RMAS, October 16, 2017.

16 Interview 5. 2018. Staff Member MOD, January 30, 2018.

in the academic world (where international politics was becoming a separate discipline) and assumptions regarding necessary knowledge and skills for young British Army officers.

A few years later, a second groundbreaking decision was made to merge military training and education into a blended learning approach, to maximize officer cadet time at the academy and to ensure the practical application of learning outcomes.¹⁷ While there have been content-related changes since, such as courses on counterinsurgency and stabilization, the overall format and approach of the blended learning Commissioning Course has remained largely unchanged.¹⁸

Discussions during the 1990s focused on the importance of military education for enhancing young officers' understanding of the new strategic context and preparing them for a wide range of operational deployments. But apart from some changes to course content, these discussions did not develop into policies, and it was not until 2015 that the Sandhurst educational program underwent notable structural changes. Until 2015, academic education for all officer cadets at RMAS was taught at the undergraduate level only. But in January, Sandhurst implemented its biggest educational change in decades and, for the first time, offered separate but parallel undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

It is important to note Sandhurst is not a university, but a military academy where training and education exist alongside each other. The decision to offer both programs in a training-intensive environment demonstrates the enhanced importance given to officer education. Soon after the postgraduate program was launched in 2018, AHEP was introduced. The pathway offered degrees in leadership and strategic studies throughout the first years of service to maximize the potential of young British officers.

A wide array of factors influenced major changes in the Sandhurst higher education program—particularly the decision to introduce the postgraduate course and AHEP: the personal interests and beliefs of those in leadership, recruitment and retention policies, and the need to maximize learning and reflect diversity in backgrounds at RMAS. But the lessons learned from operational experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan also played an important role in recent decisions regarding the British Army's higher education policy.

As a result of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army has more "battle hardened and experienced officers and soldiers than [it] has had for several decades."¹⁹ Many returning officers have provided

17 Interview 3. 2017. Staff Member RMAS, November 27, 2017; and Richard Holman Thain, Ambrose McDonough, and Alan Duncan Priestley, "The Development and Implementation of a Teaching and Learning Strategy at a Modern Military Academy," *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 32, no. 4 (2008): 297–308.

18 Ian F. W. Beckett, "British Counter-Insurgency: A Historiographical Reflection," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 4–5 (2012): 781–98.

19 James K Wither, "Basra's Not Belfast: The British Army, 'Small Wars' and Iraq," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 20, no. 3–4 (2009): 611–35.

valuable feedback to RMAS on how to improve the professionalism of the British Army in contemporary conflicts. Although much of the blame for recent operational failures went to the political level, where the Army's general weaknesses and gaps in the training and education of young officers received fierce criticism, there was a growing belief that standards of training and education needed adjusted to deliver officers who were fit for purpose.²⁰

Indeed, Iraq and Afghanistan have “severely tested assumptions of [the UK’s] competence in counter-insurgency and the ability of its institutions to adapt to unconventional conflicts.”²¹ Such criticisms posed the question of a need for institutional reform not only in the wider Army as a whole but also in officer education more specifically.²² The drivers behind the resulting changes included military and civilian actors, working through both formal and informal structures, with a strong impetus from lessons learned in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Sandhurst model of developing young officers through a one-year intensive and integrated course is substantially different from most other NATO military academies, which often offer four years of academic study alongside military training. Recent changes, however, demonstrate a trend toward increased importance given to academic study. While also reflecting the needs of recruitment and retention, this trend demonstrates an increased desire on the part of the British Army to develop young officers who are not merely good tactical-level decisionmakers but also cognizant of the potential strategic implications of their decisions—in other words, strategic lieutenants.

Blended Learning

The Sandhurst interpretation of strategic mindedness is executed through an approach of “blended learning,” in which military training and education are integrated to allow cross-fertilization in the learning process and maximize student potential. It reflects the RMAS ethos of a student-focused and active learning environment.²³ While not an academic course, the Sandhurst Commissioning Course is a yearlong intensive and highly integrated program where academic subjects delivered by three academic departments (Defence and International Affairs, Communications and Applied Behavioral Science, and War Studies) are taught alongside military training, and where classroom learning is applied in military exercises. This intensive civil-military cooperation helps develop strategic-minded lieutenants.

20 Graeme Lamb, “Operational Success—Strategic Failure,” *British Army Review* 137 (Summer 2005): 48–51; Wither, “Basra’s Not Belfast”; and E. J. R. Chamberlain, “Asymmetry: What Is It and What Does It Mean for the British Armed Forces?,” *Defence Studies* 3, no. 1 (2003): 17–43.

21 Johnson, *Wars in Peace*.

22 Ledwidge, *Losing Small Wars*.

23 An Jacobs and Norma Rossi, “Best Practices in Academic Contributions to UK Defence Engagement: Teaching International Conflict Management in Chile,” *Wish Stream Journal* (2018): 76–77.

The Commissioning Course is taught across the junior, intermediate, and senior terms with the blended learning approach omnipresent throughout the year. Under this construct, students may, for example, have military tactics, physical training, and academic study all in one morning. While certain academic subjects are taught in classroom settings such as seminar groups, interactive lectures, or centralized lectures, the blended learning approach comes to life in exercises.

The first comprehensive exercise where blended learning is applied is Exercise Normandy Scholar, which takes place at the end of the junior term and is delivered jointly with academic and military personnel from the War Studies department. It covers two main themes: military decision-making through the combat estimate and developing an understanding of the realities of war. While an initial lecture provides the strategic, operational, and tactical overview, cadets also receive a realistic problem for a combat estimate prior to deploying to the exercise, on which they receive feedback afterward through a staff-led discussion. By the end of the exercise, students are expected to have a better understanding of the history of the battle, its military-tactical details, and the usefulness of a combat estimate.

Second, Exercise Agile Influence is a multiagency negotiation exercise led by the Communications and Applied Behavioral Science department that enhances cadets' understanding of the human terrain and the relationships between different actors in a conflict-affected village reflecting tribal dynamics, state actors, nongovernmental organizations, government departments, and indigenous peoples. This daylong exercise exposes the cadets to role-playing and is predominantly influence focused.

Third, and building upon Agile Influence, the weeklong Exercise Templar's Triumph is a stabilization exercise in a complex human terrain comprised of regular forces and various insurgent groups. Cadets must create an environment of sufficient stability to allow government forces to flourish. Cadets are asked to take the roles of government forces, opposing forces, and the civilian population by expanding on skills and knowledge acquired through previous exercises. They are expected to learn to think like the enemy and to conduct estimates on how to unhinge rival forces. The multiagency context they are provided has additional assets in this exercise, such as search teams and dogs, media teams, political advisers, and bomb disposal teams. This exercise is also the key testing ground for the concept of the law of armed conflict.

Finally, Exercise Dynamic Victory exposes the officer cadets to a truly complex and mixed operational environment of states, insurgents, proxy forces, and state-controlled deniable forces ("little green men").

Exercises are also being converted to the Decisive Action Training Environment to include elements of contemporary operations such as cyberwarfare and the use of unmanned aerial vehicles and to learn lessons from partners in conflict. This allows students to apply their

knowledge and skills to solve tactical problems in a range of scenarios derived from actual threats.

The exercises at Sandhurst, in general, reflect the mission command culture of the British Army, where initiative, responsibility, and trust are central ingredients. The elements of initiative and trust are especially relevant as they underscore the need for a thorough understanding of operational complexities and the wider strategic picture at all levels of decision-making.²⁴ The Information Age generates circumstances where this interpretation of mission command is the fundamental basis of success.²⁵

In sum, the Sandhurst approach puts thinking at the forefront, and applied knowledge and intellectual skills are valued higher than academic knowledge in the narrow sense of the word. Blended learning and exercises enhance the strategic mindedness of officer cadets by exposing them to complex environments. In addition, the blended learning approach provides flexibility, allowing RMAS to make adjustments when necessary, so students are exposed to relevant operational challenges. As a result, the design of the exercises themselves reflects the growing complexity of the British strategic context and its operational requirements with regard to context, skills required, and types of deployments.²⁶

The British Army Higher Education Pathway

While blended learning was adopted as the educational practice at Sandhurst before the end of the Cold War, British officer education has also witnessed substantial adaptations more recently. At the start of 2015, RMAS introduced postgraduate education alongside its already existing undergraduate strand, to allow students with a relevant educational background to embark on a master's degree in the early stages of their officer career. This marked the beginning of a broader acknowledgment of the importance of military education in the wider Sandhurst curriculum, and in 2018, pathway was set in motion.

This new mechanism awards young officers the opportunity to complete BSc and MSc degrees in leadership and strategic studies through the RMAS partnership with the University of Reading during the first years of their service. It seeks to “maximise . . . talent and develop individuals with higher conceptual and analytical skills to support future roles.”²⁷

As discussed above, launching AHEP was driven to some extent by the British Army's aspiration to regain its domestic and international standing after failures in Iraq and Afghanistan, which resulted in a renewed focus on the education of young officers from the very early

24 Sergio Catignani, “Getting COIN² at the Tactical Level in Afghanistan: Reassessing Counter-Insurgency Adaptation in the British Army,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 35, no. 4 (2012): 513–39.

25 Jim Storr, “A Command Philosophy for the Information Age: The Continuing Relevance of Mission Command,” *Defence Studies* 3, no. 3 (2003): 119–29.

26 Interview 5. 2018. Staff Member MOD, January 30, 2018.

27 Maj Gen Paul Nanson, quoted in British Army, *Army Higher Education Pathway: Lead and Learn—Degrees While You Serve* (London, British Army, 2018), 2.

stages of their educational path in the Army.²⁸ While some suggested the most urgent educational requirements existed on the midranking officer level, the decision was made to adjust the educational structure early in officers' careers, starting at Sandhurst. This approach sought to tackle what had been criticized as a "deeply entrenched anti-intellectual tradition. . . . that discourages critical thinking."²⁹

The AHEP mechanism implemented through the Individual Development Branch and related courses will continue during the early stages of an officer's career to link training, education, and professional roles. It also seeks to enhance military education within the British Army and to develop higher-level conceptual and analytical skills to support future responsibilities. Its purpose is to maximize talent and to professionalize thinking in the Army, create agile minds, and enhance diversity in the officer corps. It reinforces relevant theories as well as historical and current military events through reflective and applied learning. The pathway adopts an integrated approach, where credits can be earned through education, training, regimental duty, and operations, to support the young officer in "being professionally capable, intellectually eager and able to adapt and learn to succeed in a complex and rapidly evolving world."³⁰

This "lead and learn" pathway, as AHEP is also referred to, aims to strengthen the British Army's lifelong career leadership and professional development opportunities. The rationale behind it is to evolve and adapt "to changing environments. . . . by developing conceptual and intellectual capacity. . . . and enable[ing] Officers to approach novel situations and develop creative and effective solutions to volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous problems."³¹

In practice, the AHEP means officer cadets at Sandhurst can, depending on their qualifications, step into a BA or MA in leadership and strategic studies in partnership with the University of Reading and its Henley Business School. Thus, "for the first time, the majority of early career courses from [the Sandhurst Commissioning Course] to the [Intermediate Command and Staff College] will be academically recognized."³² The courses delivered by the academic departments at Sandhurst are validated as one-third of the total degree (see figure 1).

Although the degrees will start at Sandhurst, they will continue during the early stages of an officer's career by adopting a unique approach that links training, education, and leadership experience. As such, AHEP underscores once more the philosophy behind the flexible and applied blended learning approach at Sandhurst.

28 Interview A. 2015. Staff Member MOD, June 25, 2015.

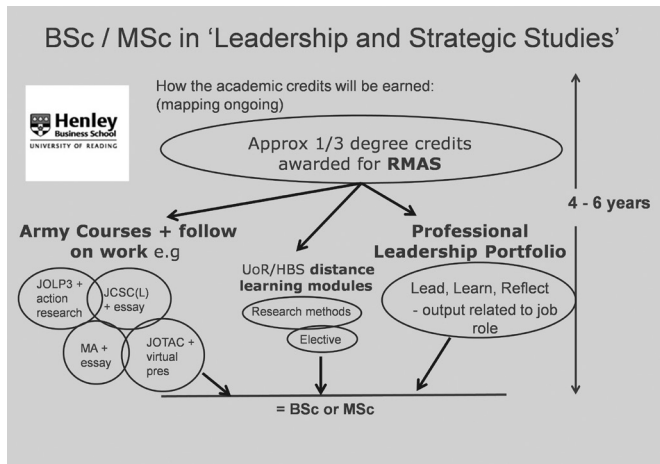
29 Daniel Marston, "Force Structure for High- and Low-Intensity Warfare: The Anglo-American Experience and Lessons for the Future" (discussion paper, National Intelligence Council 2020 Project, Washington, DC, 2004); and quote in Tom Mockaitis, "Losing Small Wars: British Military Failure in Iraq and Afghanistan," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 24, no. 4 (2013): 760–62.

30 Interview 6. 2018. Senior Officer, Sandhurst Group, May 7, 2018.

31 British Army, *Army Higher Education Pathway*.

32 British Army, *Army Higher Education Pathway*.

Figure 1. BSc/MSc in “Leadership and Strategic Studies”



Challenges of the Sandhurst Model

While the British Army and wider Ministry of Defense have expressed great confidence in the value and effectiveness of the blended learning approach and the wider educational pathway, they do present challenges specific to the Sandhurst model.

Firstly, academic departments at RMAS only have a limited amount of time with the officer cadets during their Commissioning Course. While other military academies may follow more traditional academic structures and approaches, officer cadets spend no more than a year at Sandhurst, during which they are exposed to an extremely demanding program of both military training and education.

Finding a perfect balance between a demanding and stimulating course, on the one hand, and leaving time and space for reflection to allow students to internalize learning processes, on the other, is therefore, a continuously challenging task. It is an ongoing quest to find ways to maximize students' learning potentials and to find the most effective and suitable balance between training and education. This challenge has been mitigated to some extent by the launch of the AHEP mechanism, which allows for a continued blended approach beyond RMAS.

Secondly, the approach requires close civil-military cooperation between academic departments and military instructors. Especially when change processes are taking place, all relevant stakeholders need to be mindful of the direction of change, to adjust academic courses, military training, and joint exercises. In addition, with a tight time schedule and a lot to fit in during the duration of the Sandhurst course, effective programming reflective of the desired learning outcomes is also a challenging task. This need for close cooperation between civilian and military personnel increases mutual understanding and respect to

further support linking strategic and operational knowledge key for developing strategic lieutenants.

Thirdly, while students at other military academies commence officer training and education after secondary education, and with little or no previous academic experience, students arriving at Sandhurst come from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds. The majority of cadets have already completed an undergraduate degree in areas as diverse as humanities, natural sciences, engineering, and sport science prior to arriving at the academy. Most of these students will enroll in the postgraduate strand. The remaining students will enroll in the undergraduate course, as they have come up through the ranks, completed A-levels, or come with work experience, and therefore have been exposed to less academic study.³³ This factor demonstrates the diversity of the background represented in the student cohorts.

While there is value in training and educating an already diverse cohort of students, doing so also poses challenges for the academic curriculum. The student diversity encourages the academic staff to adopt innovative teaching styles such as problem-based learning, classroom debates, group work, and learning through exercises to ensure that collective learning takes place and the student diversity works as a tool to maximize individual learning outcomes.

Measuring Effectiveness

Measuring the effectiveness of the blended learning approach and the AHEP is challenging for various reasons. While RMAS continuously conducts evaluations regarding the Commissioning Course as a whole, student evaluation forms do not inquire about the effectiveness of the program and the learning outcomes at later stages of officers' careers. Similarly, the academic evaluations are predominantly concerned with content-related feedback, and to what extent the students feel that they enhanced their academic skills, knowledge, and understanding as a result of the Sandhurst military education program.

The blended learning approach has stood the test of time since the 1980s, demonstrating the long-standing support for this approach across military ranks. A number of senior military officers—including the current Commandant of the Sandhurst Group Major General Paul Nanson—have emphasized the value of incorporating academic learning into military training and expressed appreciation for the military education they were exposed to while at Sandhurst during later stages of their career.

As the introduction of a postgraduate strand and the implementation of the AHEP are such recent developments, it is too early to measure their impact and to assess the effectiveness of the current curriculum throughout officers' career. But monitoring young officers' first year of

33 An Jacobs, "Teaching IR at Sandhurst: Blended Learning through an Integrated Approach," in "International Relations in Professional Military Education," special issue, *Infinity Journal* (Winter 2016): 50–55.

service over the next decade will shed some light on this. Captains and majors can reflect on the value of their learning at Sandhurst and beyond, and how AHEP has helped them develop as strategic-minded officers.

For the purpose of this article, a sample group of 75 students was asked to complete a questionnaire anonymously with specific reference to strategic thinking skills. The students were asked to assign a value of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much) to the following statements:

1. The Sandhurst approach of delivering military education and training alongside each other and bringing them together in exercises has given me the ability to put classroom learning into practice.
2. The Sandhurst approach has given me the ability to see the bigger strategic picture in operational situations.
3. I feel confident about my ability to understand the bigger strategic picture in operational situations.
4. The Sandhurst program has helped me to better understand the complexities of operational environments.
5. I consider myself a strategic-minded young officer/officer cadet.

While the results are preliminary and incomplete, they nevertheless provide interesting initial insights into students' perspectives of how the Sandhurst program contributes to strategic thinking. In addition, a few interesting observations can be made about the initial data.

Firstly, as a general point, the answers demonstrate the majority of the students have answered the above questions with a four (considerably) or five (very much). Not a single student has responded "not at all" to any of the questions, and only an average of 4.2 percent of the students responded with "to some extent" across the five questions. We can, therefore, assume the sample group overall sees a positive correlation between the Sandhurst course and developing into strategic-minded officers.

Secondly, while for three out of five questions, 20 percent or less of the student sample selected "moderate," 30 percent or more selected "moderate" for question one (has the Sandhurst approach given the student the ability to put classroom learning into practice) and question five (do the students consider themselves strategic-minded officers) scored. This feedback may suggest there is room for improvement in these areas.

Furthermore, some of the students who "moderately" considered themselves a strategic-minded officer, also said the Sandhurst program "very much" helped them to understand better the complexities of operational environments. Such responses demonstrate the students do not necessarily equate understanding complex realities with "being" a strategic lieutenant. Ensuring the knowledge and understanding acquired through military education is internalized and adopted in a way that influences a young officers' decision-making may be something to consider in this respect.

Acknowledging the limits of this questionnaire and the related findings, we can draw no definitive conclusions from these data. But these initial student responses can provide a starting point to plan and execute future targeted questionnaires on a larger scale. Sandhurst can then gather more data and conduct accurate statistical analysis to be better informed about the impact and effectiveness of the Sandhurst Commissioning Course in developing strategic lieutenants.

Conclusion

This article has shown there are elements of continuity and change in Britain's strategic context, as well as its approach to military education at Sandhurst. While the link between changes on the strategic level and changes in military education is hard to detect, at least certain recent structural changes to the curriculum have been influenced by strategic experiences. The increased importance given to military education, reflected in the introduction of a postgraduate course in 2015 and the launch of the AHEP in 2018, was influenced by—among other factors—lessons learned from operational experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Sandhurst educational philosophy is firmly based on interactive and applied learning, as reflected in the blended learning approach that combines training and education through flexible and active pedagogy. The blended learning approach has been a consistent tool to enhance officer learning since the 1980s and has been applauded for its worth by all military ranks. Only time will tell whether the recent changes in military education will be considered equally effective.

The initial questionnaire provides some useful directions for future evaluations and further research. Firstly, more than 30 percent of the students labeled the Sandhurst approach only moderately conducive to putting classroom learning into practice and considering themselves only moderately as strategic-minded officers. Making further inquiries about the reasons behind these scores through more extensive questionnaires will help RMAS understand what measures can be put into place to improve this score. This is linked to the wider theme of this volume—how are strategic lieutenants developed successfully, which is an underexplored but valuable research topic.

Secondly, student responses suggest there is a discrepancy between developing strategic thinking, on the one hand, and actually being a strategic-minded officer, on the other. Future evaluations would benefit from exploring this issue further. In addition, further research on how to internalize learning in fast-paced, intensive, and demanding military environments; to adopt skills and knowledge in everyday life; and employ learning outcomes in professional tasks will offer useful insights for the study of military education. Enhancing the understanding of the impact of blended learning can feed into the design of the Sandhurst curriculum to improve further the quality of the strategic-minded British officer.

Finally, the blended learning approach overall has been applauded and appreciated by officers at later stages in their career. But at the same

time, more than 30 percent of students at Sandhurst label its effectiveness for applied strategic mindedness as “moderate.” This might imply a delay in the learning process between Sandhurst and the subsequent courses at the Defense Academy in Shrivenham. As the AHEP offers a more continuous process of military education, it will be a valuable exercise to measure not only its impact over the next two decades but also the effectiveness of RMAS and the overall British approach to military education.

Book Reviews

DEFENSE STUDIES

War in 140 Characters: How Social Media Is Reshaping Conflict in the Twenty-First Century

By David Patrikarakos

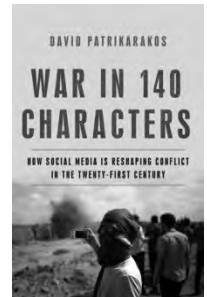
Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, adjunct research professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

London-based correspondent David Patrikarakos was initially inspired to write *War in 140 Characters* by his reporting in eastern Ukraine during the spring of 2014. There he saw firsthand how Twitter was providing more up-to-date information than traditional print and television media (2). He then studied ensuing events in Gaza between Hamas and the Israel Defense Forces as well as the rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. These situations confirmed his suspicion that the nature of conflict was changing due to the weaponization of social media. Hence, as the author states, “This book was formed in the crucible of twenty-first-century-war” (255). It chronicles the rise of what Patrikarakos terms the “Homo digitalis”—the hyperempowered individual who is networked, globally connected, and able to use social media (via narrative construction and deconstruction) to influence the outcome of conflict directly in a posttruth world (9).

The book is divided into an acknowledgments section, an introduction, eleven chapters, a conclusion, notes, and an index. Each chapter chronicles the impact of social media on a specific conflict and discusses the profile and activities of a major figure. The first chapter pertains to the Gaza conflict and the impact of the July–August 2014 tweets of the Palestinian teenager Farah Baker. The second and third chapter address the Israeli side, focusing on the counternarrative activities of Israel Defense Forces members Aliza Landes and Peter Lerner, respectively.

The fourth and fifth chapters focus on the 2014 Facebook exploits of the civilian Anna Sandalova to obtain supplies and other goods in support of Ukrainian forces. The sixth chapter discusses the late-2014 social media activities of Vitaly Beshpalov, a Russian troll in St. Petersburg. The seventh chapter discusses the use of social media by Vladimir Putin’s regime to help destabilize Ukraine and then seize Crimea.

The eighth and ninth chapters chronicle the metamorphosis of Eliot Higgins. He was initially an obsessive *World of Warcraft* (massively multiplayer online role-playing game) player who established the Bellingcat website. Higgins became a respected and innovative open-source intelligence researcher following his involvement in tracing the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 over Ukraine in July 2014 to the Russian military (167).



New York: Basic Books, 2017

220 pages

\$30.00

The tenth chapter highlights the online recruitment of Sophie Kasiki—born in Senegal and then living in France—by Islamic State operatives. It also details the journey of her and her young son into, and their subsequent life in, the Caliphate as well as their eventual escape from Raqqa and repatriation back to France.

The eleventh chapter provides an overview of the 2012–15 activities of Alberto Fernandez, who headed up the US State Department’s Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications. This center produced content directly aimed at attacking the narratives of al-Nusra and the Islamic State.

The introduction and conclusion are well-developed with the book’s findings squarely postmodern in their orientation: social media is individually empowering and exploitative, offering both control and freedom, and anti-state in nature in portraying the power of nonstate networks over hierarchies (257–58). In this regard, Alec Ross’s quote is very telling: “Good ideas die in hierarchies. Social media does not lend itself to the clearance process. It fundamentally degrades the effectiveness of diplomatic institutions” (263). Still, autocracies appear to be adapting to this disruptive technology quicker than liberal democratic states. The work is filled with useful information and nuanced insights into how not to cede “social media space” to your opponents and identifies useful open-source intelligence sites and apps such as SunCalc.net, PixiFly, and Slack.

The book is extremely well-written and an easy, relatively quick, and pleasurable read. The citations are adequate with a conceptual reliance on Mary Kaldor’s book *New and Old Wars* (2012) and P. W. Singer and Emerson T. Brookings’s pre-*Like War* article “War Goes Viral” in the *Atlantic* (2016). Of these constructs, Kaldor’s view of twenty-first century military success as being able “to avoid battle and to control territory through political control of the population” is greatly evident within some chapters of the work (261).

While the reviewer was initially put off by the specific major figure treatment within each chapter (or within successive chapters), it allowed each social media weaponization vignette—be it set in Gaza, Israel, Ukraine, Russia, Syria, or the United States—to become more readily digestible and contextually grounded around each character’s life story.

Since the work is now a few years old, it can be purchased at a discounted price. It should be read in conjunction with Clint Watt’s *Messing with the Enemy* (2018) and P. W. Singer and Emerson T. Brookings’s *Like War* (2018)—both of which it predates—for maximum impact concerning the changing nature of conflict and the weaponization of social media.

This subject matter is having an immense impact on how contemporary warfare (and gray zone conflict) is being conducted by authoritarian states, such as Russia and China, and radical Islamist terrorist entities, such as Hamas and the Islamic State. Senior military

officers and defense policymakers would be highly remiss in not educating themselves on such an ascendant phenomenon.

Dark Commerce: How a New Illicit Economy Is Threatening Our Future

By Louise I. Shelley

Reviewed by Dr. Robert J. Bunker, adjunct research professor, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College

Dark Commerce builds upon decades-long research conducted by Louise Shelley—a contemporary of Moisés Naím, author of *Illicit* (2005)—and a multilingual heavy hitter in the world of transnational organized crime scholarship. She is presently a professor at George Mason University and the founder and director of its Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center established in 1998. Dr. Shelley’s earlier works include *Dirty Entanglements: Corruption, Crime and Terrorism* (2014) and *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective* (2010). The thesis of this new work is that “old forms of illicit trade persist, but the newest forms of illicit trade, tied to computers and social media, operate as if on steroids” (2).

It is much in line with perceptions earlier developed by Nils Gilman and his colleagues in *Deviant Globalization* (2011) and other scholarly works that argue the illicit economy is growing far quicker than the licit. And it represents a means to obtain much higher levels of profit than formal economic activities. Supporting this assertion is the modeling of this evolution in the tables on “The Stages of Illicit Trade” and the licit and illicit “Entrepreneurship and Trade” operations within the business cycle (113, 121). While earlier stages of physical-based illicit trade have not subsided, they have been augmented with computer-facilitated crime, then solely computer-based illicit trade focused on virtual and intangible cyber commodities—such as botnets, passwords, social media influence, malware, data, and digital pornography. Interesting components of the work also concern new constructs—such as *dysfunctional selection* as “non-evolutionary change [due to illicit activities] that results in survival of the less fit” akin to the tuskless elephant (5)—and newer terms have appeared due to the effects of planetary resource degradation, such as *water mafias* and *climate refugees* (6).

The book is divided into an acknowledgments section, an introduction, eight chapters, a conclusion, notes, and an index. The introductory chapter provides an overview of “the fundamental transformation of illicit trade” that is now taking place. The following three chapters provide background and processes related to illicit trade from ancient times to 1800, 1800 to the end of the Cold War, and from 1993 to the present. Chapter 4 offers a detailed study of the exponential growth of the rhino horn trade (between South Africa and Asia) while chapter 5 discusses illicit trade business models.



Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018

376 pages

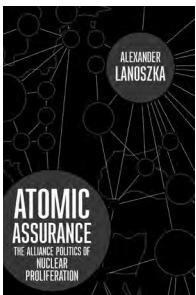
\$29.95

Chapter 6 focuses on how illicit trade destroys people, and chapter 7 illustrates how it is killing our planet. Chapter 8 summarizes the complex picture of illicit trade proliferation in our globalized world and concludes with ways to counter the challenges illicit trade poses for humanity and the planet. The book is very well researched and highlights the most cutting-edge work produced in the field of transnational organized crime today. It contains 100 pages of detailed endnotes and represents a multiyear effort by Dr. Shelley, utilizing online, depository, and field research supported by university and foundation grants.

Where the work falls short, however, is in the concluding chapter. While vertically and horizontally integrated and unconventional approaches are called for, the book ultimately provides what amounts to a listing of recommendations. These items relate to legal and regulatory policy, awareness and education, changing sociopolitical and environmental mentalities, and some strategies to address environmental and cyber-related illicit trade and to curb corruption. We are left with the less-than-satisfying “Hail Mary” proclamation: “The challenges are great and the windows of opportunity to reverse the planet’s present tragic course are limited. Let us hope that the mundane but important acts of ordinary citizens, combined with the extraordinary acts of the few, help reverse the current growth trajectory of dark commerce” (250).

It is the reviewer’s opinion that far more time and effort was placed into modeling and analyzing the rise of the new illicit economy (primarily computer assisted and cyber based) and too little—including any serious modeling or analytics—was spent on the so-what, back-end-response component.

In summation, *Dark Commerce* does a first rate job of identifying the threat of a new illicit economy as well as the historical processes and the more recent technological drivers further fueling it. Still, the work would have benefited from far more structure and analysis related to developing mitigation and response strategies concerning the emergence of a new illicit economy, rather than the fact we desperately need them. Dr. Shelley does a commendable and vital service of providing field grade military officers, strategists, and policy analysts with a strategic early warning related to this new threat. Hopefully, in her next work, she will focus on providing guidance on how to address dark commerce effectively.



Atomic Assurance: The Alliance Politics of Nuclear Proliferation

By Alexander Lanoszka

Reviewed by Dr. Mark Duckenfield, Department of National Security and Strategy, US Army War College

Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press
216 pages
\$49.95

Alexander Lanoszka’s monograph, *Atomic Assurance*, has as its central thesis “alliances are more effective in deterring *potential* nuclear proliferation than in curbing actual cases of nuclear proliferation” [italics

added] (9). The crucial role for an alliance is in providing a potential proliferator with enough credible assurance for the alliance partner to defend it adequately; as a result, the proliferating ally need not take the path of self-help and pursue an independent nuclear deterrent.

West Germany, Japan, and South Korea are the three primary cases, but the question arises as to how much variation there is in the dependent variable as none of these American allies actually ended up developing nuclear weapons. Lanoszka attempts to resolve this through tracing the in-depth historical analysis of the steps in the proliferation decision-making process. *Atomic Assurance* is at its strongest in its discussion of US foreign-policy making. The frustrations, stratagems, and triumphs of US policymakers are closely tracked through the extensive use of primary American sources from Presidential libraries, as well as an array of State Department and National Security Council documents.

A short-coming of this approach—a common one in security studies—is it provides an American perspective on the problem of alliance management and nuclear proliferation. The prism for information and interpretation is often an American one as the primary documentation for information from abroad is that which is communicated to the United States from its allies. Especially in as contentious an area as nuclear proliferation, there is reason to question whether the concerns German, South Korean, and Japanese governments conveyed were themselves designed to extract concessions from the United States rather than truly reflecting the strength of concerns of the allies.

Atomic Assurance's central argument emphasizes that security considerations and domestic politics of the potential proliferator are the real agency; merely imputing them from American records and (usually American) secondary accounts thus weakens the evidentiary foundation of the case. In fact, from the source material, it is unclear alliances actually do prevent a potential proliferator from pursuing enhancement of nuclear capabilities as all of the countries in the study, by its own terms, pursued some degree of nuclear proliferation. To ascertain effectiveness, some cases where an allied country should have had reason to pursue nuclear proliferation but did not even start would be helpful in providing leverage on the crucial question. Dogs that do not bark are often as important as those that do.

There is another anomaly in the research design: Lanoszka only examines alliances that include the United States. He does note Cold War-era proliferation issues affected both NATO and the Soviet Bloc. Considering there were proportionately more potential proliferators in American-led alliances than in Soviet-dominated ones might suggest a crucial variable is the nature of the alliance and the underpinning relationships between its members.

As a result, it is probably no accident the three nuclear-curious countries in the Soviet alliance were the three most independent from the Soviet Union—China, North Korea, and Romania. Likewise, the

lining up of the USSR's Warsaw Pact allies, as well as almost all of its Arab proxies as initial signatories to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), indicates formal and informal arrangements can facilitate some degree of alliance coordination.

There are also variations in the types of American-led alliances—ranging from the multilateral alliance of NATO to the bilateral arrangements the United States has with Japan and South Korea. However, the definition of alliance used here is confined to written agreements. While this is both parsimonious and provides a clear definition, it also obscures the ebbs and flows a more flexible definition of alliance might reveal.

At first glance, this might appear to preclude a less rigorous analysis of cases where the rationale for variations is the writer's assessment of commitments implied in unwritten understandings, rather than the hard realities of a written treaty commitment. But in process tracing, Lanoszka makes precisely these assessments about domestic politics and perceptions of the international threat environments and alliance coordination.

The Warsaw Pact crushing of the Prague Spring doubtless raised German security concerns not just about German domestic politics. West German ratification of the NPT occurred at the same time as Italy and the Benelux countries due to intra-European and NATO alliance coordination, an aspect not mentioned. *Atomic Assurance* addresses several of these variations in five shadow cases—Australia, France, Great Britain, Norway, and Taiwan—ranging from one page (Australia) to five pages (Great Britain). The brevity of the coverage of these cases prevents a fuller assessment of the important questions they raise, but Lanoszka is to be commended for including them as a starting point for further inquiry.

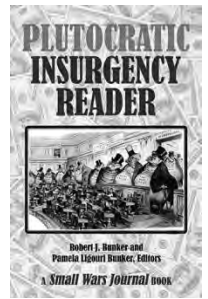
This book makes clear contributions to discussions in both academic and practitioner communities. It widens the field of academic discussion by breaking free of data sets and delving into some of the dynamics and contingent processes through which policy is made. Lanoszka avoids concluding on a pessimistic note, emphasizing continuity of American military and technological predominance can alleviate security concerns among its allies if policymakers are attentive to demonstrations of alliance commitment.

The book's final paragraph contains a strange typographical error referring to potential "Teutonic shifts" in the international balance of power (158). Given the tectonic shifts in international security accompanying the fall of the Berlin Wall and the earlier tremors emanating from Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* (easing the path to ratification of the NPT), one could choose to believe this is the author's subtle joke about the prospects for sudden change in the international system. Nuclear proliferation could have just such a consequence.

Plutocratic Insurgency Reader

Edited by Robert J. Bunker and Pamela Ligouri Bunker

Reviewed by Dr. José de Arimatéia da Cruz, professor of international relations and comparative politics, Georgia Southern University and adjunct research professor, US Army War College



Bloomington, IN: Xlibris,
2019
376 pages
\$19.99

According to the US Army and Marine Corps *Counterinsurgency Field Manual* (2007), an insurgency is “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict” (2). Bard E. O’Neill, in his seminal work *Insurgency & Terrorism*, defines an insurgency “as a struggle between a nonruling group and the ruling authorities in which the nonruling group consciously uses political resources . . . and violence to destroy, reformulate, or sustain the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspects of politics” (15). There are several types of insurgencies, such as anarchist, egalitarian, traditionalist, apocalyptic-utopian, pluralist, secessionist, reformist, preservationist, and commercialist.

With the publication of the *Plutocratic Insurgency Reader*, Robert J. Bunker, adjunct research professor at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, and Pamela Ligouri Bunker, nonresident fellow in terrorism and counterterrorism at TRENDS Research and Advisory, Abu Dhabi, add an additional layer to an already extended list of insurgencies. But unlike other insurgencies that attempt to overthrow legitimate governments to establish their fiefdoms, plutocratic insurgencies depend on the existence of the state as well its institutions for survival. As Bunker and Bunker clearly state:

plutocratic insurgency arises wherever you see financial and economic elites using [their created enclaves] as staging areas for making war on public goods. . . . the defining political-economic feature of plutocratic insurgency [is an] attempt on the part of the rich to defund the provisioning of public goods, in order to defang a state which they see as a threat to their prerogatives (2).

Like guerrillas fighting a war of the fleas, plutocratic insurgents do not want to obliterate the state. They simply, like parasites, want to carve out de facto zones of autonomy by crippling the state’s ability to constrain their freedom of economic action (13). These zones of autonomy then enable individual, tribal, or interest group enrichment (23).

One direct, unintended consequence of globalization is the advancement of predatory capitalism, which plutocratic insurgents have ingeniously integrated into their arsenal of tools to advance their causes. Predatory capitalism is exploitive and oppressive to those below the top one percent. Predatory capitalists use bribery, corruption, coercion, and cooptation to maximize gains and minimize loss. Additionally, to generate profits both nationally and transnationally, plutocratic insurgents use lawyers and lobbyists, rather than violence or overthrowing the state, to create a shadow governance in pursuit of plutocratic policy objectives (219).

Plutocratic insurgents turn the public into their own fiefdom through privately owned public spaces (141). These so-called pseudo-public spaces are former public spaces now in the hands of corporate or plutocratic elites, and they are governed by restrictions drawn up by the landowner, with private security companies or gangs usually enforcing the rules (141–42).

At this junction, it is important to emphasize a plutocratic insurgency is not the same as a kleptocracy. While both organizations' primary goal is to siphon the wealth of the states, the process by which they achieve their goals and objectives are different. As Bunker and Bunker point out, kleptocracies use the institutions of state to loot the population, whereas plutocracies neutralize those institutions to facilitate private-sector looting (2).

Regardless of whether we call them kleptocracies or plutocracies, the impact of their nefarious activities on the social fabric of society is the same. Their malfeasances destroy the social fabric of society by creating a system of impunity. They create a judicial system that has no authority. They create a government that lacks authority, autonomy, and the capability to address some of the most heinous crimes in a democratic society. Most importantly, it undermines the democratic process.

As John Sullivan states in *Plutocratic Insurgency Reader*, “‘criminal insurgencies’ and ‘crime wars’ are altering the nature of sovereignty and governance” (286). Furthermore, Sarah Chayes argues in her book, *Thieves of the State*, “corrupt government practices contribute to severe economic distortions, threatening financial sector stability” (186).

The end of the Cold War and the “end of history” have led to a more interconnected and globalized world in the twenty-first century. At the same time, the democratization of technology has created a new environment in which previously suppressed actors can exercise greater power via the internet in a dark, deviant globalization. When corrupt politicians join forces with plutocratic insurgents, nation-states pay the price because corruption threatens national and global security.

I recommend Bunker and Bunker *Plutocratic Insurgency Reader* to our future military leaders at the US Army War College. The 27 readings, ranging from September 2012 through February 2019, provide a longitudinal view of the development of plutocratic insurgency for learners. While the concept of plutocratic insurgency may seem “like old wine in a new bottle,” its impact today is more pervasive than ever, and its forms are also morphing to adapt and adjust to the changes within the unstable international system of the post-Cold War.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Red Teaming: How Your Business Can Conquer the Competition by Challenging Everything

By Bryce G. Hoffman

Reviewed by Dr. Charles D. Allen, professor of leadership and cultural studies,
US Army War College

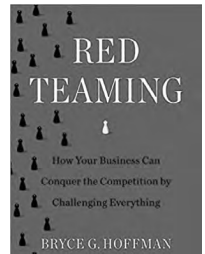
Red Teaming is a book where readers can learn what business leaders have culled from the US military experience over the past two decades. It is an organizational “how-to” that provides tactics, techniques, and procedures to improve decision-making and performance for leaders and managers. As such, the process of red teaming is a component of organizational development with the goals to achieve successful organizational change and improved performance through the alignment of organizational learning and knowledge management.

Bryce Hoffman is a former financial journalist who transitioned to a career as an organization consultant and author. His first book, *American Icon* (2012), is a best seller cited by senior US Army leaders for its key takeaways about leading and managing change in a large enterprise. In 2015, Hoffman gained the distinction of being the first non-US government civilian to attend the Red Team Leaders Course at the Army’s University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

Through that unique experience, Hoffman learned of the origins, challenges, and evolutions of red teaming. As a result, he embraced the concept and wrote this book to expand upon and provide methods for any organization to “stress-test its strategy, perfect its plans, flush out hidden threats, identify missed opportunities, and avoid being sandbagged by unexpected events or new competitors” (250). While the author is ambitious in such claims, he provides a well-written presentation of concepts, an effective narrative of their application in military and civilian organizations, and useful caveats for leaders and managers.

The book is well-organized as it begins with a critical reflection by the US Army and the intelligence community in the wake of the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, and subsequent military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. When strategies, plans, and operations failed to achieve desired outcomes, it was necessary to reexamine processes and structures, as well as individual factors of decision-making—hence, the need for red teaming. The reader learns through historical accounts that red teaming is not a new concept, nor is it unique to the US Army.

The author identifies the core problems red teaming addresses when the biases of individuals are compounded in groups and within organizations. Chapter 3 presents “the Psychology of Red Teaming” with well-researched and established findings on individual cognition

New York: Crown Business,
2017

288 pages

\$28.00

that lead to inappropriately applied heuristics, biased judgments, and use of logical fallacies.

The purpose of red teaming is linked to its description in *Command Red Team*, US Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1-16, where the command red team is a “cross-functional organizational element comprised of trained members that provide the commander with an independent capability to explore fully alternatives in plans and operations and supporting intelligence, and to enhance staff decision-making through the simulation for critical and creative thought” (I-2).

In chapter 4, “How to Start Red Teaming,” Hoffman directs the reader to consider key questions of the type of red-team model to use, as well as how to staff and to support the team. The three subsequent chapters reveal red teaming is the application of strategic thinking—specifically creative thinking, critical thinking, and systems thinking—which are familiar to senior-level war college graduates. New to military readers will be the compilation of tools and techniques to frame problems, to discern underlying assumptions, and to generate alternative perspectives. Hoffman provides several such tools with practical applications and examples of their use in well-known business organizations. To employ red teaming effectively requires the understanding of organizational culture as well as organizational climate. It also requires an appreciation of team and group dynamics in the decision-making process.

Hoffman asserts that for a red team to be effective, it must be accepted as providing value to the organization. Given that red teams, by design, are not invested in derived plans, courses of action, and selected solutions, the teams are inherently contrarian and viewed as disruptors to organizational processes. Providing value is evident when the red team voice is sought and listened to. While the red team interjections and assessments may not change the organizational strategy, plan, or solution, its engagement can clarify assumptions, generate exploration of potential consequences, and inform contingency development. Hence, red teaming becomes a necessary organizational capability to improve performance of the organization and its members.

Perhaps chapter 10, “The Rules of Red Teaming,” is the most insightful: like in *American Icon*, Hoffman provides caveats for leaders with pithy taglines. Of the seven rules, “Rule 1: Don’t Be a Jerk” and “Rule 6: You Don’t Always Have to Be Right—But You Can’t Always Be Wrong” are useful to consider regardless of the type of team or organization—military or civilian.

National security professionals may be more comfortable with former senior fellow of the Council of Foreign Relations and political scientist Micah Zenko’s treatment of the topic in *Red Team* (2015). Hoffman’s work, however, is more accessible to members of the defense community with engaging vignettes that clearly illustrate the how-tos of red teaming for the military pragmatist. Senior defense leaders will readily find parallel opportunities in warfighting and enterprise organizations within our military to apply red teaming in pursuit of better strategies.

How Militaries Learn: Human Capital, Military Education, and Battlefield Effectiveness

By Nathan W. Toronto

Reviewed by Marc R. DeVore

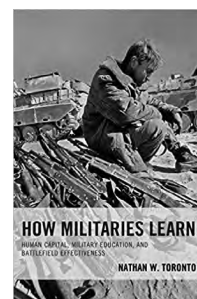
Few questions are more preoccupying to military professionals than why some militaries perform better than others. Certain states, such as Muammar Gadhafi's Libya and Mobutu Sese Seko's Zaire, suffered disaster when they fought smaller and less well-armed opponents, such as the Libyans in Chad during the 1970s and 1980s and the Rwandans in Zaire during the 1990s. Other states, such as Israel, performed better in their engagements with conventional Arab militaries than a material "bean count" would suggest.

What explains these wide variations in military performance? Scholarship on this issue has flourished in recent years, with Kenneth Pollack highlighting culture's role, Caitlan Talmadge demonstrating civil-military relations' impact, and Stephen Biddle advancing the adoption of combined arms tactics as a *sine qua non*. Despite these works, we are still far from attaining a holistic understanding of military performance. Nathan Toronto's recent book, *How Militaries Learn* contributes to this ongoing endeavor.

Militaries will underperform, according to Toronto, unless their officers have first developed the intellectual habits needed to adapt their weaponry and training to changing battlefield conditions. Military higher education therefore contributes powerfully to battlefield performance by instilling in officers the requisite intellectual flexibility.

Although Toronto makes a broad-based argument for prioritizing military education, he champions one particular form of education as separating the world's most efficient armed forces from all others. Socratic teaching methods, as practiced in Western academic institutions, are the key to success. Rote learning, by way of contrast, cannot develop the cognitive skills officers need. Ultimately, a successful system of military higher education system—based on Socratic teaching methods—will develop the essential habits of institutional introspection and critical analysis within an officer corps to prevail at war.

While Toronto advocates Socratic pedagogy in general, he specifically champions the education of midlevel officers. Although most states possess military academies—often organized along the lines of France's Saint-Cyr, the United States Military Academy, or Britain's Sandhurst—that educate junior officers Toronto advocates postgraduate military education play a greater role in shaping battlefield performance. Toronto devotes his attention to the family of institutions whose progenitor was the Prussian War College and which includes such diverse American bodies as the National Defense University, the Command and General Staff College, and the School of Advanced Military Studies.



Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018

166 pages

\$90.00

Toronto competently demonstrates his argument's plausibly in a variety of ways. He begins with a statistical test demonstrating that states possessing staff colleges are more likely to win wars under *ceteris paribus* conditions. He then offers brief case studies of Prussia, France, Turkey, and Egypt. These cases show states deliberately developed staff colleges as a means of enhancing their military power, frequently in the aftermath of catastrophic defeats or periods of military underperformance. Staff colleges' emergence, moreover, often coincided with periods of economic growth and improving human capital in society. Toronto, finally, offers a longer study of the ongoing effort of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to create a National Defense College.

Toronto does an admirable job at shedding light on postgraduate military education as an important, yet neglected, factor contributing to military power. While Toronto's effort is notable, it nonetheless leaves important questions unanswered. I, in particular, would have appreciated greater clarity on the mechanisms whereby military postgraduate education translates into battlefield outcomes and on the question of whether the classroom environments needed to develop intellectual flexibility in the armed forces can thrive in societies that lack a modicum of political pluralism.

Although Toronto postulates military postgraduate education improves battlefield performance, he never explicitly states how this occurs. Three responses, however, could be offered—for example, armies with better educated midrank officers may win because they excel at the operational level of war. In a slightly different vein, the real advantage of such armies may lie in the superior adaptability of battalion and regimental commanders when facing unexpected circumstances. Finally, the value of well-educated officers may manifest itself at the strategic level, when it comes to making long-term decisions about force structure and doctrine.

While these mechanisms are not mutually exclusive, Toronto's failure to discuss how military postgraduate education yields battlefield results becomes perplexing once one contemplates his case studies. France's poor performance during the Franco-German War, for example, was a product of incompetence at the operational level, which the oftentimes adroit tactical improvisations by midranking officers could not remedy. The Egyptian case, however, suggests tactical adaptability is the primary value of military postgraduate schools. In this case, Egyptian generals developed an ingenious war plan prior to the Yom Kippur War (1973) despite Egypt not possessing an adequate system of military postgraduate education, yet midlevel Egyptian officers' inflexibility in changing circumstances ultimately led to defeat. Toronto, meanwhile, suggests better peak-level defense policymaking is one of the advantages postgraduate education provides, yet also shows how capable rulers—Turkey's Ataturk and Egypt's Mohammed Ali—excelled in this regard despite possessing a comparatively undereducated officer corps.

Just as Toronto fails to address how military postgraduate education produces results, he also vacillates as to whether such education systems are compatible with states lacking political pluralism. Authoritarian governments understandably wince at inviting officers to engage in free-ranging Socratic debates. Toronto acknowledges this factor when he argues “stable” civil-military relations are a prerequisite for first-rate military education institutions. He also shows in his chapter on the UAE how students and faculty members eschew examining certain important regional security issues for fear of upsetting authorities. Despite these strong suggestions that some level of pluralism is a precondition for the institutions Toronto advocates, he at times suggests the reverse. He suggests, for example, that regime type is irrelevant to the quality of military postgraduate education and claims, without support, illiberal societies, such as Russia and China, possess military postgraduate schools on a par with the best in democratic states.

Toronto’s work, *How Militaries Learn*, in sum, merits a place on the bookshelves of commanders and scholars preoccupied with understanding military performance. The book makes an important and original argument. While it fails, at times, to answer the questions it poses, those *lacunae* should spur further debate rather than detract from the book’s value.

Lessons in Leadership: My Life in the US Army from World War II to Vietnam

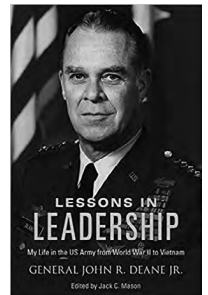
By John R. Deane Jr.

Reviewed by Dr. George J. Woods III, COL, US Army (Ret.), professor of strategic leadership, Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, US Army War College

With the US Army’s reinvigoration and reorganization of the Center for the Army Profession and Leadership, the memoir by General John R. Deane Jr., which reflects lessons in leadership from his distinguished 36-year US Army career, could not be timelier. He attained four-star rank having served as the deputy assistant chief of staff for Research, Development, and Acquisition (1973–75) and as the commander of Army Materiel Command, which was redesignated Development and Readiness Command under his command (1975–77).

The lessons emerge through stories of the major events that shaped his development as an officer in a variety of assignments in war and peace. Five years after his death at the age of 94 in 2013, Deane’s memoirs were published through the committed effort of his editor, Jack C. Mason.

While the book emphasizes events from World War II and Vietnam, the first and final chapters capture key moments in Deane’s life before and after those wars. The first chapter describes the influence Deane’s father, a general officer, and his contemporaries had in the young Deane’s life as an army brat. Deane’s early exposure to the Army lifestyle influenced



Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2018

304 pages

\$50.00

his pursuit of admission to the United States Military Academy at West Point and eventual Army career. Failing to meet the physical standard for admission, Deane enlisted in the Army where he “learned more in that year about leadership—about what men aspire to, what influences them, what motivates them—than in any other year in [his] life” (11).

Admitted to West Point the next year and graduating with the Class of 1942, he was commissioned as an infantry officer, serving with the 104th Infantry Division, deployed to the European Theater of Operations in 1944. Initially serving as the regimental intelligence officer, he became a battalion commander within the year. The 104th Division was commanded by the legendary Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen—a friend of Deane’s father. Allen represented another aspect of Deane’s professional life and development—exposure to key mentors who provided invaluable advice and examples for Deane to follow.

Following his tour in Europe, Deane served in US Army, European Theater of Operations where he devised a counterespionage program to keep Soviets operating in Germany in check. He performed a similar role to counter North Korean threats after the Korean War. His subsequent Pentagon assignments afforded him influence in important budget expenditures and investments in research and development. His assignments in the Washington, DC area included service as the deputy director of the Defense Intelligence Agency and his career-culminating assignment as the commander, Army Development and Readiness Command at Fort Belvoir.

Military professionals can glean important themes throughout the book that offer timeless lessons in leadership. Appropriately, Don Snider’s 2005 *The Future of the Army Profession* defines four identities for Army professionals (warrior, leader of character, member of profession, and servant of country). Deane’s memoirs are replete with examples of each in the stories from his assignments in World War II (1944–45) and Vietnam (1966–67) in which he was duly recognized with several decorations for valor.

Illustrating leader of character, Deane recounts several events in which he displayed physical and moral courage. Deane displayed character when making tough decisions—whether taking bold actions to test East German resolve when the Berlin Wall was first erected or during contentious budget debates in the Pentagon.

He demonstrated character by holding himself and others accountable to standards—be it defending his response to a challenge his regimental commander presented or in describing stories of General William E. Depuy’s relief of officers in Vietnam. Similar acts of courage occurred when he stood up to superiors and underwrote mistakes his subordinates made while learning to become better soldiers.

As servant of the nation, Deane’s acceptance of assignments like the deputy at the Defense Intelligence Agency or when assigned to the Defense Communication planning Group demonstrated his willingness to place service to the nation above his personal desires. Furthermore,

his service highlighted instances in which he executed his duties in spite of disagreement with policy or policymakers. The dilemmas exemplify difficult challenges professionals face at the most senior levels of defense.

Finally, as a member and steward of the profession, Deane embraced two critical obligations. First, he internalized the responsibilities of stewardship as defined in the US Army's *The Army Profession* "to strengthen the Army . . . to care for the people and other resources entrusted . . . by the American people. . . . [and] accomplish every mission ethically, effectively, and efficiently" (2015, 6-2). Second, he mastered "expert knowledge" (professional competence) and invested in the development of others through mentoring, training, preparation, and holding people accountable for achieving standards.

Deane's service rendered throughout his career should inspire those who currently serve, and military professionals should widely read the lessons he offers in leadership. Using his memoir to spur discussions among professionals would be a most fitting tribute to his work.

MILITARY HISTORY



Ithaca, NY: Cornell
University Press, 2019

360 pages

\$34.95

Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order

By Timothy Andrews Sayle

Reviewed by Dr. Joel R. Hillison, professor of national security studies, US Army War College

The more things change, the more they remain the same in NATO. This year NATO celebrated its 70th anniversary, a significant accomplishment for any alliance. Despite many predictions over the years of NATO's imminent demise, the Alliance remains as relevant today as it was in 1949 when the Washington Treaty was first signed. Timothy Sayle's new book, *The Enduring Alliance*, gives some of the reasons for NATO's continued relevance.

This well-written and thoughtful book examines the history of post-World War II Europe and the evolution of NATO. It does so through the lens of specific incidents that have put pressure on ties that bind the Alliance. In each instance, NATO adapted, and members found a way to compromise to keep the Alliance intact.

In order to understand why NATO endures, the author first examines systemic forces. The bipolar world into which NATO was born required the United States and its allies to confront the ideological, economic, and security challenges posed by the Soviet Union. In the brief unipolar moment that followed the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, contrary to the prediction of many scholars, NATO played an important role in ensuring stability in Europe during a time of dramatic disruption. Not only did NATO provide an opportunity for many former Warsaw Pact nations, and republics in the Soviet Union, to rejoin Europe, it provided Russia with some assurance a reunited Germany would rise peacefully within the constraints of the Alliance.

Sayle also spends a great deal of time discussing the importance of domestic politics within the key member states. For example, Britain had to juggle its desire for a special relationship with the United States with its desire to join the European Economic Community. The United States had to balance its competing global demands during the Vietnam War with calls from Congressional leaders, such as Senator Mike Mansfield, that Allies pick up more of the burdens of the Alliance or the United States would bring its forces home. It also looked at struggles within Germany to balance the need for greater nuclear reassurance with a growing antinuclear, populist movement. Throughout NATO's history, national leaders had to balance these competing demands and justify its continued relevance to an often skeptical public.

Finally, the book examines the role of key individuals in either causing disruption in NATO or finding mechanisms to reach consensus

and move the Alliance forward. Clearly, founding leaders played a crucial role in standing up NATO. Lord Hastings Lionel Ismay, General Dwight Eisenhower, and Field Marshall Bernard Law Montgomery were uniquely able to guide the Alliance through its initial stage of development and provide a structure to meet its aspirations.

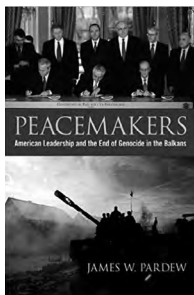
This mirrors the role of leaders such as French foreign minister Robert Schuman and West German chancellor Konrad Adenauer in enabling early European efforts such as the European Coal and Steel Community. As NATO evolved, individuals within (German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, US President George H. W. Bush) and outside of the Alliance (President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev) played a significant role in the survival of the Alliance. Activities of key individuals inside the Alliance also caused unnecessary strains, such as US President Jimmy Carter's handling of the neutron bomb and French President Charles de Gaulle's withdrawal from the integrated military structure.

The book does a nice job in looking at several key incidents that occurred that might have resulted in the demise of the Alliance such as the Suez Crisis; the Soviet Union's intervention in Hungary in 1956; France's departure from the integrated military structure; and the fall of the Soviet Union. While the threat of the Soviet Union (and a future revanchist Germany) were essential to the beginning of NATO, the author argues NATO endured for much broader reasons. Throughout NATO's history, the real necessity was US leadership to maintain security and stability among member states. This was not only for the benefit of US Allies, but also for promoting vital US interests.

Paradoxically, in order to avoid war and the threat of war, alliances have to be ready and willing to fight. Yet an equally important role for NATO is maintaining the political unity of the Allies, for together, the Allies are much more resilient against external threats and a sometimes fickle electorate. NATO enabled the reconstruction of European economies and provided the security umbrella under which Europeans could pursue an ever-closer union. NATO endures because it enables collective action to demonstrate strength against threats like Russia (and perhaps China), to allow Germany to continue to take its rightful place within Europe without invoking fears of its history, and to keep the United States engaged in a region vital to US interests.

This book will be of interest to international relations scholars, Europe enthusiasts, and those interested in Alliance dynamics. Foreign policy practitioners will also find relevant historical analogies as the Alliance routinely dealt with issues such as burden sharing, the role of larger members, and the very purpose of the Alliance itself. It also highlights the difficulties in justifying continued investments in NATO to a domestic audience that is increasingly untouched by the horrors of the World Wars of the twentieth century. The book is well researched and clearly written. It is a quick but substantive read, delving into sufficient detail to explain the nuances of each phase of NATO's evolution. The overarching takeaway is NATO endures because it serves

members' interests. Members gain greater influence and stability within the Alliance than would be possible without it.



Lexington: University Press
of Kentucky, 2018
424 pages
\$39.95

Peacemakers: American Leadership and the End of Genocide in the Balkans

By James W. Pardew

Reviewed by Dr. Pat Proctor, a retired US Army colonel, who authored four books including *Blameless? The 1990s and the US Army's Role in Creating the Forever-Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq* (forthcoming)

Ambassador James W. Pardew, a former military officer, had a front-row seat for the American military and diplomatic interventions in the Balkans from 1995 to 2008. He served as a high-level member of Ambassador Richard Holbrooke's negotiating team in 1995. After the beginning of the NATO peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Pardew led the US training and equipping effort. As a special representative, he led the international effort to record Serbian atrocities in Kosovo. Pardew also served as the US special envoy to Macedonia during tense negotiations to avert a civil war in 2001 and as the US ambassador to Bulgaria from 2002 to 2005.

In this memoir, Pardew makes the case “American leadership of the international intervention in the former Yugoslavia ended the most destructive set of regional conflicts and humanitarian disasters in Europe since World War II” (xiii). *Peacemakers* opens with the US intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995). The book then provides a detailed account of the US-led effort to overcome Serbian opposition to—and US military reluctance toward—training, equipping, and unifying a joint Croat-Muslim army in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Pardew also recounts the NATO intervention in the Serbian province of Kosovo in 1999, focusing much more on events prompting the air war and negotiations ending the bombing than the subsequent US-led peacekeeping mission.

This book truly shines in its account of the little-known crisis in Macedonia and US-led negotiations narrowly averting a civil war there in mid-2001. The dispute, primarily between ethnic Albanians and Slavs in Macedonia, went largely unreported in the United States for a number of reasons. First, by 2001, the American public had grown weary of ethnosectarian conflict in the Balkans. Second, the new administration of President George W. Bush came to power with promises of an end to nation building; they were understandably reluctant to publicize the possibility of a new nation-building mission in Macedonia. And, only weeks after the signing of the agreement ending the conflict in Macedonia, the events of September 11, 2001, turned the world's attention away from the Balkans to the Middle East and central Asia. In *Peacemakers*, Pardew provides a long overdue examination of the events and players pulling Macedonia back from the brink of war.

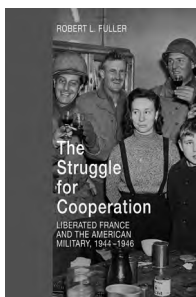
As a firsthand account and primary source material for historians of US policy in the Balkans, this book is without equal. Despite his closeness to the subject matter, Pardew provides objectivity lacking in other works such as Holbrooke's *To End a War* (1998) or Christopher R. Hill's *Outpost* (2015). At the same time, Pardew's closeness to the events put the reader in the plane with Holbrooke and his team as they discuss strategy and in the room during US negotiations with Slobodan Milosevic and his cronies who were simultaneously committing genocide and denying their involvement.

The military officer or defense policy professional reading *Peacemakers* will be confronted with a number of uncomfortable truths. Pardew recounts the repeated efforts of senior US military leaders to block US military intervention in the Balkans. This book also details the obstruction by US military leaders in Washington and in the field against the effort to arm and to train the nascent Bosnian army after the intervention began. Pardew does pull a few punches. He fails to note the US military's willful refusal to hunt down and to capture indicted war criminals in Bosnia. And he stops just short of blaming the US Army's misguided post-Cold War focus on high-intensity conflict for causing its incompetence in dealing with the low-intensity conflicts in the Balkans. But Pardew's honest appraisal of the US military's obstructionism throughout this period will still hit military professionals painfully close to home.

Peacemakers, colored by Pardew's role in these events from within the US government, is not completely clear-eyed. It suffers from many of the same maladies besetting US intervention policy then and now. The author shares the delusional beliefs of the US diplomatic corps in turning failed states into multiethnic, multicultural democracies and of the State Department's insistence on preserving borders drawn by aged imperialists a century ago.

Moreover, Pardew accepts without question the US insistence on appearing neutral toward all parties and refusing to pick a winner in the conflict. Like the US government at the time, Pardew's criteria for judging the success of America's intervention in the Balkans includes single-digit US military casualties and an end to ethnosectarian violence rather than the creation of a political solution facilitating the departure of international peacekeepers. *Peacemakers* is silent on the international military peacekeeping mission in Bosnia—currently under the auspices of the European Union—continuing to this day with no end in sight.

These criticisms aside, *Peacemakers* is an essential book for anyone wishing to understand the history of international interventions in the Balkans. And as the American foreign policy establishment struggles with how to end ethnosectarian civil wars in Syria and Yemen, this book deserves close examination.



Lexington: University Press
of Kentucky, 2019

260 pages

\$60.00

The Struggle for Cooperation: Liberated France and the American Military, 1944–1946

By Robert L. Fuller

Reviewed by Michael S. Neiberg, US Army War College

Just hours after the Germans left Paris, Charles de Gaulle made a triumphant march down the Champs-Élysées to the Notre-Dame Cathedral, a symbol of conservative, eternal France. Soon thereafter, he gave an impromptu speech from a balcony on the Hôtel de Ville—a symbol of left-leaning France. In doing so, he sent a message not just to the French people, who had not yet decided upon him as their postwar leader, but also to the Americans, who had not yet ruled out a military occupation of France.

Suspicious of lingering collaborationist sentiment and worried about powerful communist elements in the big cities, the Americans had prepared a full occupation, including a military scrip. De Gaulle's coup de main and the enthusiasm with which the French people (left, right, and center alike) received him, rendered those plans useless. But the US Army remained in France in large numbers, and the two sides would need to figure out a way to coexist to pursue the common interest of defeating Germany.

In this highly detailed book, Robert Fuller studies the Franco-American relationship on the ground in France. His chapters analyze topics like requisitions, transportation, the use of ports (especially Marseille, the second most important Allied port in Europe behind only Antwerp), refugees, German prisoners of war, black markets, and the occasionally ill-disciplined American soldier. There is more detail than argument in this book. Fuller's main theme is the largely uncontroversial one that the Americans and the French had points of friction, but they usually managed to work their difficulties out eventually. Both countries saw the need for France to continue to sacrifice in order to bring about Germany's defeat.

Fuller gives short shrift to how devastated France was in 1944–46. The defeat in 1940 had not only wounded French pride but also led to an armistice that forced France to pay an enormous sum for its occupation and accept a franc-to-mark exchange very much to Germany's advantage. By 1942, a mandatory labor scheme sent thousands of young French men and women to Germany to work in factories, and the Germans seized most French railroad stock.

Especially after June 1944, the Germans treated France as a larder, taking all the food it possibly could and shipping it back to Germany. American soldiers were shocked at how thin French men and women looked, and General Omar Nelson Bradley finally decided to authorize the dispatch of armed forces to Paris, in large part because he had reports the city was on the brink of famine.

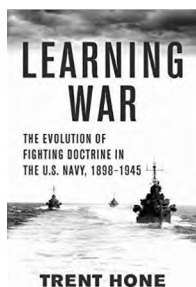
Fuller also pays too little attention to the damage done to France by the Allies. American and British bombers devastated the French transportation network to secure the Normandy bridgehead from German reinforcements. They also targeted Paris, the single most important rail center in the country. Air raids over the La Chapelle district killed hundreds and gave the collaborationist leader Philippe Pétain a chance to argue France was the innocent victim of a war between the Anglo-Saxons and the Germans.

Allied logistical problems after the Normandy landings created further tensions. Needing to move forward, but short of almost everything, the Allies quite naturally began to requisition food and supplies from the people they were liberating.

The Americans wanted supplies to fight the Germans, and the French wanted to return to normal life as quickly as possible. This conflict of interest put France and the United States in competition for the same finite set of resources. A lack of a common language, the small number of Americans who broke the law or took more liberties than they should have, and heavy-handed American policy exacerbated the problems. These problems created tensions, but Fuller argues they never got out of control or caused the US Army significant problems.

For all their differences, the two sides did share an important common goal—winning the war. Lower-level French and American officials, Fuller argues, worked hard to solve problems and find solutions. American civil affairs officers, mostly majors, found themselves in control of towns. They normally found ways to work with mayors, using American resources to repair water lines, rebuild bridges, and help stamp out crime. These acts built goodwill, but the French still looked forward to the moment when the Americans would move on, letting them rebuild their lives for themselves.

Although *The Struggle for Cooperation* does not present any new or startling findings, it sheds light on an important, and often overlooked, segment of America's involvement in the Second World War. The images of joyous French men and women celebrating their freedom masked the real problems of daily life in the wake of war. Unsure what they would find in France and anxious to keep fighting the Germans, American officers had to improvise. Fuller shows us how they did so, usually with success, in an incredibly difficult environment. Today's civil affairs officers would do well to learn from this period of American history.



Annapolis, MD: Naval
Institute Press, 2018

432 pages

\$34.95

Learning War: The Evolution of Fighting Doctrine in the U.S. Navy, 1898–1945

By Trent Hone

Reviewed by Dr. Sarandis Papadopoulos, Secretariat Historian for Naval History and Heritage Command

At the risk of sycophancy, the core of *Learning War: The Evolution of Fighting Doctrine in the US Navy* is a book which this reviewer once wanted to write. During the Solomon Islands campaign in 1942 and 1943, the US Navy perfected its tactics, methods which allowed it to defeat the highly skilled Imperial Japanese Navy. For author Trent Hone, this result was not the product of happenstance. Instead, the American Pacific War victory had its genesis in the writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan, who viewed naval strategy as a knowledge-based discipline, explained by a set of common practices, a tactical doctrine, bred over the next two generations. The Naval War College incubated the development of these ideas, concepts tested by the fleet, all managed by a series of senior leaders who saw the service needing a naval “combined-arms approach” (1).

Hone uses doctrine as a source to explain how and what the Navy learned. The book studies the service’s “enabling constraints,” which shaped its internal language and assumptions, making learning possible (4). To create flexible tactics, the fleet experimented in a “safe to fail” environment encouraging officers’ aggressiveness and adaptability, which became and remained their common intellectual frame (9). Learning paid off during the Navy’s wartime battles, whose success Hone measures not by comparing ship losses for the sides in each action, but by asking whether they met operational or strategic goals. Aggressiveness and adaptability, acting as “heuristics” to permit independent solutions, allowed the remaining fleet after Pearl Harbor to recover, seize the initiative and win, admittedly at high cost: more than 5,000 sailors died off Guadalcanal, including two admirals (207).

As a management consultant, Trent Hone writes history as a sideline, yet everything here is of professional quality. This book follows on the heels of his previous essays and coauthored book, *Battle Line* (2006). His sources, rooted in Navy officers’ published writings and exercise reports between 1898 and 1941, battle experience between 1942 and 1944, and vitally tactical publications, are complete. What Hone explores through them is the evolution of tactics in the US Navy’s surface force and the extension of combat doctrine to include the aircraft carrier portion of the service later in World War II. At its roots, Hone convincingly argues the US Navy created a “complex adaptive system” to collect evidence from exercises and battles, assess it, posit solutions, distribute them to the fleet, and then repeat the process.

The Navy’s core problem was its confrontation with rapid, continual change. Both before and after 1915, when naval officer Dudley Knox highlighted the military use of doctrine, the Navy integrated ever more

tactical complexity. Gunnery exercise ranges lengthened threefold just before World War I, then doubled in the next decade. Despite the increasing distance challenge, artillery accuracy continually improved under the enabling constraint of fire control taught by William Sims. The Navy later added a linguistic shorthand for clearer correction of fire (63, 83). Torpedo tactics evolved as their ranges lengthened, too. As aviation technically matured, initially for gunnery spotting then for strikes, the Fleet Problems (21 large interwar exercises) allowed experiments with it. Solving these problems reliably in peacetime meant, despite the ruin at Pearl Harbor, the fleet took into stride the technology of radar, while using the Combat Information Center and signals intelligence respectively to manage and to improve its learning. The system defeated the Imperial Japanese Navy, fighting on its preferred terms at night.

The human side gets its due here. The leading figure for Hone is the oft maligned, admittedly mercurial, Ernest King. Service in destroyers—as aide to Sims, a submariner, and a pilot (earning his wings at age 48)—before becoming chief of naval operations in 1942, King was arguably the best example of the Navy’s increased emphasis on learning and education” who led his peers and subordinates (326). Other leaders, only slightly less accomplished (Chester Nimitz, Raymond Spruance, Marc Mitscher, Frank Fletcher, “Ching” Lee, and Arleigh Burke), ably filled roles in wardrooms, and as ship, squadron, task force, and theater commanders using the learning system. Plainly put, the Navy taught officers how to solve problems. Only the Navy’s massive wartime growth, requiring greater standardization for its enormous reservist officer corps, trimmed the complex adaptive system, making late war changes more incremental in nature (316).

Some of *Learning War*’s initial tables are disconnected from its text; later ones become crucial (26, 86). The US Navy’s submarines are largely absent. Fleet boats were meant to scout and support the battle line, although history instead saw them conduct commerce warfare. But submarine doctrine, focusing on what we now term the high-end fight, needed reworking after the war’s start, another example of adaptability. The Atlantic theater, where anti-submarine warfare also had a learning curve, is not examined. Nor are the Navy’s torpedo problems analyzed. For submarines and surface ships, torpedoes often failed: two destroyers shot over a dozen Mark XV weapons to scuttle the USS *Hornet* in October 1942, but most misfired. Knowing fallibility of torpedoes undoubtedly forced officers to emphasize gunfire during ensuing night battles.

Since 1996, a touchstone book for historians and naval officers of a peacetime fleet failing to learn has been Andrew Gordon’s *The Rules of the Game* (1996), studying the Royal Navy before the Battle of Jutland. *Learning War* is so clear, and makes the case for American doctrinal flexibility so well, this reviewer must argue we now have another book of equal importance to comprehend. Daring to sound glib, before the US Navy outfought the Imperial Japanese Navy, it had outthought it. Members of any armed service will gain from studying *Learning War*, and will recognize the Navy’s success when they read this book.

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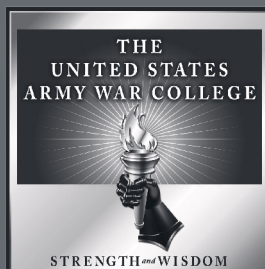
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