

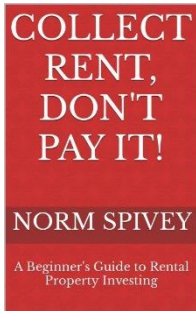


WRITING TO LEAD

A Look at Military Leader Development Through
Academic Writings

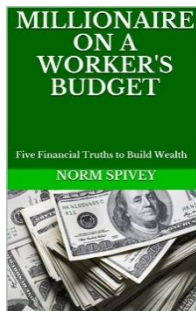
NORM SPIVEY

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**A Look at Military Leader Development
Through Academic Writings**

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Colonel, United States Army (Retired)

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First Published 2020

ISBN 978-1-7352159-1-4 (eBook)

This book contains writings submitted as academic assignments completed during required Professional Military Education. The views, opinions and biases expressed are the authors and do not reflect those of the U.S. Army or the Department of Defense.

This book is dedicated to the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines who, while their officers frequently left the line to learn “how to think,” maintained the watch and kept our nation secure.

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INTRODUCTION

“We aren’t here to tell you what to think, but to show you how to think”

-Commonly heard expression during military Professional Military Education

What makes the United States military the best in the world? Most would assert unmatched spending of national treasure for the latest armaments and technology. They are partially correct. Ask anyone who has served and they will likely tell you the attribute which sets the U.S. military apart from our competitors is the significant investment and continual emphasis on leader development. The U.S. military is an up or out system. Service men and women must continually seek leadership opportunity as well as complete required leadership developmental milestones for as long as they serve.

This investment in leader development does not always come in what one might think of as training specifically designed to teach the student how to fly planes, drive ships, or break things better, although increasing a leader’s technical competence through skills based military schooling is a key component of overall leader development. More often than not, the military education component of leader development comes in the form of learning experiences designed to teach students “how to think, not what to think” and conducted in academic environments similar to civilian colleges.

This book offers a small glimpse into one military officer’s developmental journey during a 24 year career by examining some of the numerous written assignments submitted to complete military education requirements. You may be thinking, “what could be more boring than reading a former student’s term papers?” True enough, but I’d assert that the subject material in the following writings is a little more interesting than your average term paper! This book is not about reviewing academic writings to assess how a military officer is trained to effectively communicate nor is this

collection meant as a treatise on the “warrior scholar”. The following academic writings provide an insight into how our military educates and develops the leadership skills of a standard “M1A1” military officer during three distinct career phases. Specifically, this collection offers a glimpse into the development of an officer during the direct, organizational and strategic leadership phases of a military career.

Before beginning this journey, we will conduct a quick over view of military leader development. Additionally, preceding each section, I will provide context about the phase of leadership we are examining, the particular academic environment and the writing assignment itself. In doing this, I will also share details of my own military journey to offer a few examples of the typical positions, timelines and challenges a military leader experiences over a standard career.

A few important things to point out- first, hopefully you read the disclaimer up front. The writings are purely academic assignments containing my own opinion (at the time of writing) and do not reflect any official government position.

Second, these writings are in no way offered as exemplars of the “best of the best” in the military. These writings did not win any awards in the schools which they were submitted (yes, the military does that) and in fact most were assessed in the “B” range. These writings are three snapshots in time of the development of a standard, but fairly successful career Army officer. If you enjoy reading academic works through the lens of an English professor or graduate level researcher, I recommend stop reading now as this book will be very disappointing!

“So why should I care about any of this?” Another good question. The former Soldier in me would offer that our military establishment and the volunteers who serve in it care about this stuff, so you should too, but that is not a very enlightened position. Like most things in life, it comes down to money. Our nation spends A LOT of taxpayers’ dollars to train, educate, and develop over one million military personnel into the best fighting force in the world. In 2016 the Army budgeted nearly a quarter of a billion dollars on professional

military education, a 21% increase over the previous year.¹ Multiply this times four services and you've got a significant (and steadily increasing) outlay of national treasure earmarked annually for military leader development.

Just in my own career, taxpayers paid for one bachelor's degree and two masters degrees. Over the course of a 24 year active duty Army career, I spent nearly four years serving in academic environments learning "how to think" all while collecting a military salary. This book will offer a small peek (sample size of one) into how the military goes about developing its leaders during Professional Military Education and Advanced Civil Schooling. While certainly not enough evidence to make any conclusions as to whether the military is getting a good return on its investment, hopefully the following pages will inspire the reader to think more about military leader development.

"Who should read this book?" I'll provide a long answer to a short question. As I recently came to the end of nearly a quarter century of service in a truly amazing profession, I did what many in a similar position would do, cleaned house! In addition to boxing up the old uniforms and accoutrements of the Soldier, I also began rummaging through containers of long since forgotten papers and digital files that hadn't seen the light of day in a very long time.

While reading and reminiscing about these relics from my golden years of service, it occurred to me, I had spent some of the best years of my life cranking out these papers! While military duty in an academic training environment is certainly better than combat deployment, I dedicated countless hours with my nose stuck in a book or banging away on a key board to spew forth 200+ pages of academic writings! Certainly no regrets and I am not complaining at all. I just couldn't bring myself to hit the delete key or shred the reams of weathered paper and I thought maybe they could be of use to someone.

I believe this book could be of great interest to many audiences. This book may be helpful to the academic,

¹ Retrieved from https://www.army.mil/article/142102/armys_fiscal_2016_budget_to_help_close_gap_for_leader_development_training

researching a thesis on leader development and attempting to gain perspective on the military's leader development system. This book may also be interesting to someone who is just plain curious and wants a peek into our nation's military in order to understand what it takes (at least academically) to be a military leader. Still others may find the actual collection of writings itself interesting; I certainly enjoyed writing and re-reading some of the following works.

However, it is my hope (selfishly) that the audience this book would appeal to the most is the junior leader, either civilian or military, who understands they must transition their leadership skills to a new level of leadership but isn't exactly sure what that really means. Hopefully the following narrative and example essays offer a glimpse of how direct, organizational, or executive leaders should develop over time. At the very least, this book will hopefully inspire the reader; if the author can make it successfully as a military officer, then they should have no problem excelling in any endeavor!

CHAPTER 1

A Brief Overview of Military Leader Development

“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.”
- John F. Kennedy

Each Service has a leader development system for commissioned officer, noncommissioned officer, warrant officer, and junior enlisted ranks. Services continually evaluate and evolve the means by which it develops leaders. Generally speaking, and in the simplest of terms, military leaders are developed by service specific work experiences, training opportunities and education programs throughout their career.

Like most things in the military, leader development is centrally managed but decentralized in execution. There is a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction covering Officer Professional Military Education Policy that provides the guidelines for not only the services’ Professional Military Education (PME) but also the Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) system which we will touch on very briefly later. For the purpose of this book, and for the sake of brevity, we will narrow our examination of military leader development to that of an Army officer.

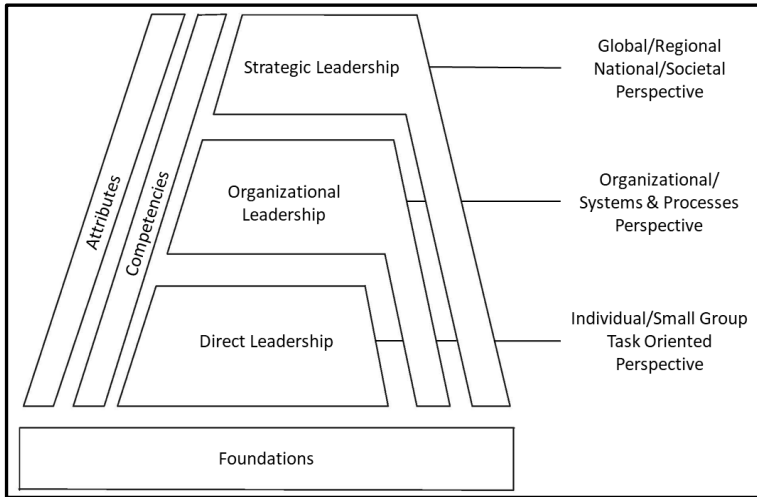
The Army invests a lot of time and money educating the officer corps. Army education and training manifests itself in many forms. Leaders are provided numerous training opportunities within their field of specialty such as the Maneuver Leaders Maintenance Course, Unit Movement Operations Course and the Air Defense Artillery Fire Control Officers course to name just three of literally hundreds of offerings designed to increase an officer’s technical proficiency and thusly develop them as a leader.

These educational opportunities are an absolutely critical piece of an Army officer’s development however, we will not try to synthesize how hundreds of nuanced technical training

opportunities contribute to leader development. In this book, we will take a look at academic assignments completed during two types of Army education- required Army Professional Military Education (PME) and Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS).

PME is a required baseline of education for every Army officer and consists of a primary, intermediate, and senior level. Each level prepares the officer to think critically, analyze complex problems, communicate effectively and most importantly, successfully conduct military operations at the tactical, operational and strategic levels. As it relates to leadership though, Professional Military Education teaches the officer, at the appropriate stage in their career, how to become an effective direct, organizational and strategic leader. Worthy to point out that these three levels of leadership correspond neatly to the doctrinal levels of warfighting- tactical, operational, and strategic. Before each section of this book, I've included the Army definition for the level of leadership we will be examining.

Other services have slightly differing definitions on the levels of leadership, but for simplicity, we will use the Army's definition to assess the academic writings in the following pages. In the meantime, the graphic below from Army Doctrine Publication 6-22 provides a good top level overview and visualization of levels of leadership.



Leadership Levels per Army Doctrine Publication 6-22

The primary level of PME focuses on Company Grade officers who the Army relies upon for direct or task oriented leadership. This level begins during a cadet or officer candidates' commissioning source- Officer Candidate School, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and the United States Military Academy. Direct leader development continues as a Second Lieutenant immediately following the officer's commissioning during Army branch specific Basic Officer Leader's Course (BOLC). After a Lieutenant gains operational experience at one or occasionally two assignments in key developmental positions over the next 3-4 years, they attend the Captain's Career Course (CCC).

Both of these PME opportunities use the tactical knowledge required for a specific branch to refine and hone the direct leadership skills taught at the officer's commissioning source and learned during on the job experiences. Upon graduation from BOLC and CCC, the officer is expected to be highly proficient in direct leadership, ready to lead platoon and company sized elements on the toughest tactical missions.

During the course of an officer's career they will often serve in staff positions designed to expose them to the next level of leadership. These are indeed confusing times as a junior officer who has been wholly focused on direct

leadership, may suddenly find themselves serving as an assistant operations officer for a 500 Soldier Battalion or even higher level organization. But this is how the Army, very skillfully, exposes the officer to the next level of leadership, organizational in this particular example, before sending them off to the next level of Professional Military Education (PME).

At about ten years of service, successful officers (WELL over 50%) are promoted to the Field Grade officer ranks in the rank of Major. Here the officer is expected to develop skills to become a master of organizational planning and processes. The Field Grade officer must influence large Army formations (think battalion, brigade, division or corps) containing multiple sub organizations towards a common purpose. Almost immediately after promotion to Major, an Army officer will complete required Intermediate Level Education (ILE).

This is the point in most officer's career where they are strongly considering or perhaps have already committed to serving within the military officer profession until retirement. The Army's ILE is delivered in a manner commensurate with the level of importance of an organizational leader and of the officer's personal career journey. ILE is a ten month graduate level experience conducted in one of two formats, the "resident" course at the Command General Staff School in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas or a "blended" ILE experience provided partially through distance learning as well as attendance at one of four satellite campuses. Additionally, a few select officers may meet Army ILE professional military education requirements by attending a sister service or allied partner school.

Upon graduation the officer is assigned to key developmental staff positions required for advancement within their Army career field. Based on their performance leading staffs in the production of plans and processes for large and complex organizations, the officer is considered for Army centralized selection to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and command of a battalion sized element. This will generally occur at around 15-17 years of service during an officer's career.

Many Soldiers assert (correctly) selection for Battalion

level command is the first truly tough cut an officer faces in their career. Majors or Lieutenant Colonels not selected for battalion level command will continue to serve as organizational level leaders in literally hundreds of staff positions across the Army. These officers are considered successful and the Army absolutely cannot run without well trained organizational leaders planning the full spectrum of Army operations.

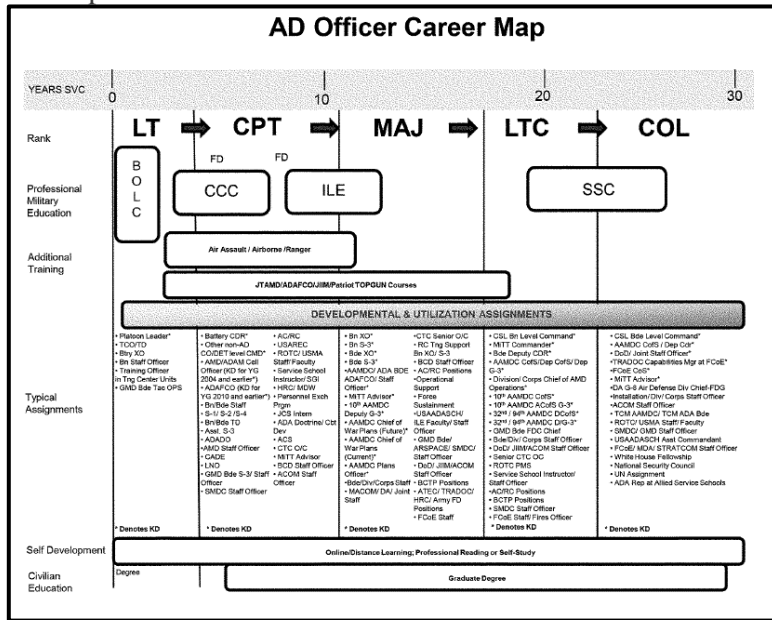
Officers selected for battalion command are generally assessed as top performers amongst their cohort. The scrutiny and importance the Army gives for battalion command selection is warranted. As battalion level organizational leaders, officers may have the responsibility of securing large swaths of enemy territory, running a large Army garrison, or perhaps acquiring the Army's next multi-billion dollar weapon system.

Based on an officer's performance during battalion level command, they are considered for promotion to senior level leadership (Colonel) and attendance to strategic or executive level professional military education. The strategic level of PME is called the Senior Service College (SSC) and is the premier military educational opportunity during an officer's career. Officers selected to attend the Senior Service College may meet the requirement not only at their own service SSC but also at sister service "War Colleges" or numerous strategically focused civilian academic programs and fellowships.

Selection to Colonel and SSC is an even tougher cut than battalion command. Colonels will almost always have over 20 years' experience and are the executive level leaders who "run" the Army's major programs and formations. They may compete for Brigade level command or serve the remainder of their careers leading Army staffs at the very highest levels (think Corps, Army staff, Joint staff etc...). It is also from this pool that the Army selects their future General officers.

The graphic below summarizes what we have just covered for an Army Air Defense officer. While there are additional educational opportunities for those officers selected to serve at the "flag" level, we will not explore general officer

development.



Air Defense Artillery officer development model from DA Pam 600-3, July 2014

With every rule in the Army there are always exceptions. While not frequent, there is constructive credit awarded to officers for some levels of PME. An Army doctor, nurse, lawyer, or chaplain may not follow to the letter, the educational route we just briefly covered. The PME milestones just reviewed are the baseline for educational leader development for the majority of Army officers.

You may also be wondering what happens when an officer fails to “achieve course standards” to use the military jargon and graduate from one of these required military education gates. This happens very infrequently, but when it does, it is most often due to the officer’s inability to maintain physical fitness or discipline standards rather than an academic deficiency. There are Army officers who may struggle academically during these schools whether due to poor learning habits, communication skills, or perhaps an undiagnosed learning disorder. The staff and faculty of Army

PME schools are very committed to ensuring every officer graduates and will take the time to assist an officer to get the help they need in order to meet PME academic standards.

We have reviewed briefly the required professional military education for Army officer leader development. Now, let's take a look at a bit more squishy Army requirements, civilian education.

While it is required by law for Army officers to earn a Bachelor's degree before or shortly after commissioning, you will find no hard and fast regulation requiring a civilian Master's Degree for continued service and promotion. That being said, it is certainly an unwritten rule (and promotion board results show) senior officers must earn a Master's Degree. While there are a very few officers who achieve the rank of Lieutenant Colonel or even Colonel without a Master's, these officers are certainly exceptions to the unwritten rule. Fortunately, the Army does a pretty good job at offering officers several opportunities to earn a fully Army funded graduate level degree over the course of a career.

As early as four years in, officers are able to take advantage of Graduate level education opportunities. Many Army Captain's Career Course schools have partnered with local colleges and universities to offer graduate degree opportunities in conjunction with required CCC PME course work. These programs generally require the student to complete a few additional classes at night or online through the college and upon completion, award graduate level degrees. Generally speaking, these degree programs are in the leadership field of study.

In some cases, the PME School itself is a regionally or nationally accredited degree granting institution. In the case of Intermediate Level Education and the Senior Service College, a Master's Degree in "Strategic Studies" or a similar major is commonly awarded upon completion of the program of instruction.

Still another way for the officer to earn a Master's degree, is Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS). These educational opportunities are competitive but officers selected for ACS is becoming a more and more frequent occurrence. The Army

fully funds selected officers for an advanced degree in a particular area of study (graduate level or in some cases, doctorate) at a civilian university. The officer must meet the admission requirements of the university and is a full time student until graduation. Some of these opportunities are at the premier colleges and universities in the United States. While attending college, the officer draws military pay / benefits but for all intents and purposes blends in with the student body. Upon graduation, the Army places the officer on a 2-3 year “utilization” tour of duty where the specialized degree earned is put to good use for a specific Army need.

Lastly, Army tuition assistance is available to cover graduate school tuition fees for officers who choose to pursue a degree on their own. While this may be the most challenging route as an officer is expected to complete academic requirements on their own time while simultaneously performing their primary military duties, using tuition assistance allows the officer more flexibility in choosing a school or major. Many colleges have satellite campuses on major installations to make class attendance and completing course work more accessible.

It is worthy to note, in any of the previously mentioned higher civilian education opportunities which the Army funds, the officer will incur an additional service obligation. However, it is not a terribly onerous commitment, equating to roughly two years of service required for every one year of academic courses the Army pays for. Additionally, and as previously stated, there are exceptions to every rule. Our Army nurses, lawyers, chaplains, and doctors have a completely different set of civilian education requirements and opportunities. Many officers who obtain a graduate level degree on the Army’s dime are very likely to remain in the profession for a career.

Not that we’ve had a brief overview of the required military and civilian educational requirements for Army officer leader development, let’s dive in and examine some academic writings from the direct leadership phase of a standard Army officer’s developmental journey.

CHAPTER 2

Direct Leadership, the Junior Officer Years

Direct Leadership from AR 6-22:

Direct leadership is face-to-face or first-line leadership that generally occurs in organizations where subordinates see their leaders all the time such as teams, squads, sections, platoons, departments, companies, batteries, and troops. The direct leader's span of influence may range from a few to dozens of people. The leader's day-to-day involvement is important for successful unit performance. Direct level leadership covers the same type of functions, such as those performed by an infantry squad or a graves registration unit.

Direct leaders develop others through coaching, counseling, mentoring, and setting the example. For instance, company grade officers and NCOs are close enough to Soldiers to exert direct influence when observing training or interacting with subordinates during other functions.

Direct leaders generally experience more certainty and less complexity than organizational and strategic leaders because of their close physical proximity to their subordinates. They direct actions, assign tasks, teach, coach, encourage, give guidance, and ensure successful completion of tasks or missions. They must be close enough to the action to determine or address problems. Examples of direct leadership tasks are vehicle maintenance, supervision of creating of fighting positions, and performance counseling.

Direct leaders understand the mission of their higher headquarters two levels up and when applicable the tasks assigned one level down. This provides them with the context in which they perform their duties.

Ask most officers and they will tell you, the Lieutenant / Captain direct leadership years are the best of their careers. Everything is new and exciting. Leader development at this stage is focused on experiential learning during the officer's first operational assignments more so than typical academic environment learning. PME during the direct leadership phase centers on mastering tactics specific to an Army officer's basic branch, however there is considerable time in the programs of instruction dedicated to reflecting on military historical occurrences of good and bad direct leadership.

The academic outputs during these years sometimes more closely resemble book reports on a particular historical event, person or battlefield rather than an in depth analysis of leadership, but in my humble opinion that is exactly what the Army is looking for. The direct leadership lessons learned during tactical engagements at Gettysburg are just as applicable today as they were 150 years ago and well inform the student to make good tactical decisions on the modern battlefield. Making young Lieutenants and Captains think critically about how the actions of heroes and villains of the past will apply to their own experiences is an important piece of direct leadership development.

These initial PME academic experiences occurred for me in the early and mid-90s in the pre-9/11 world. Most of the tactics and leadership learning in our programs of instruction were oriented on a linear battlefield and defeating a Soviet style enemy. No one anticipated the events of 9/11 that would unfold in just a few short years or how those events would revolutionarily impact leader development. The academic writings completed during my ROTC, officer basic course and captain's career course professional military education schools were rookie attempts at analyzing and reflecting on direct leadership. Unfortunately, the academic works I completed during these schools have long since disappeared. Most were produced either on a typewriter or using early word processing tools then saved to a floppy disk. I didn't even own a personal

computer until I was 24 and after I graduated the officer basic course!

I was very fortunate however, to have an additional educational experience during the later portion of my direct leadership years which provided an excellent opportunity to reflect on my own direct leadership skills and hone them to perfection while preparing for the mental shift to organizational leadership.

In 2002 during my seventh year of service and towards the end of my tenure as a Battery commander, I applied for a position as a Tactical Officer at the United States Military Academy (USMA). A tactical officer is a senior Captain or junior Major who serves as the legal commander for one of 32 USMA Cadet Companies. Although the cadet chain of command runs most of day to day life at the academy, the "Tacs" as they are known, closely monitor, coach, and supervise the cadet leaders. Additionally, Tacs are ultimately responsible for guiding each of the 120 cadets in the company along their academic, physical, and military developmental journeys while attending the academy. I was very honored and humbled when notified of my selection for this important program in the fall of 2002.

USMA sends selected officers for one year to an Advanced Civil Schooling program aptly named the Tactical Officer Education Program (TOEP) prior to their utilization assignment as tactical officers. When I went through the program in 2003, we completed a graduate program in Counseling and Leader Development from Long Island University in Roslyn, NY. In the current program, now called the Eisenhower Leader Development Program or ELDP, Tac officers complete Organizational Psychology master degrees from Columbia University. The report date for my cohort of Tac officers was early summer of 2003. There was just one small problem, many of us were deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom!

This was in the early stages of the war when the Army was still struggling through a Vietnam era individual replacement system versus the unit rotations they quickly adopted. I redeployed later in 2003 and thankfully accommodations were

made for those of us who arrived a few months late to get caught up on the graduate level academics. The 15 month program included an aggressive schedule of LIU led classes for the “counseling” portion of the degree as well as a number of USMA courses which accounted for the “leader development”. USMA faculty served as adjunct professors for the leader development courses while the LIU faculty taught the psychology and counseling material. Most of the instruction was completed at West Point but a few courses were held at the LIU campus in Roslyn, NY. Unlike some other Army advanced civilian schooling opportunities, TOEP program attendees remained more immersed in the Army lifestyle. We wore uniforms during the courses taught by USMA faculty so there was little wiggle room on military grooming or physical standards. That being said, it was still a nice break from normal Army duty, especially after redeploying from a war zone.

After graduation from the program with a Master of Science in Counseling and Leader Development in the summer of 2004, each member of the cohort was assigned to serve as legal commander for one of 32 cadet companies. Interesting to note, graduates of the program also had the option (using Army tuition assistance) to continue education with LIU during night courses in order to meet the supervision, instruction and testing requirements for the National Board of Certified Counselors, National Certified Counselor (NCC) certification. I pursued this option and in 2006 earned my NCC certificate which I have maintained the continuing education requirements for until this day.

I often tell people I learned more about leadership during my years as a West Point tactical officer than in any other assignment. I could write volumes about the interactions with the truly amazing young men and women who passed through USMA’s halls while I served there. But alas, that is not the focus of this book! The academic instruction I received during the TOEP program was an equally important part of my leader development and certainly helped transition my leadership focus from direct to organizational. In my humble opinion, this gave me a leg up (at least in leader development) on some of my fellow Army officers when I returned to the operational

force. The two most comprehensive and challenging academic writing assignments during the program of instruction were both part of the USMA led leader development courses (read into that what you may). These two academic assignments are included in the following pages.

In the autumn of 2003 I reported to West Point for the TOEP program incredibly proud of my military accomplishments but apprehensive about being charged with the leader development of America's best and brightest at the academy. Equally concerning was diving into an academic environment with a cohort of Tacs who were some of the top officers in the Army. A quick look at my undergraduate transcript clearly indicates academic excellence was not a priority for me!

While my wife and I completed the arduous task of moving our household from Germany to West Point, NY, I attempted to become familiar with the academy by reading Rick Atkinson's exceptional work, *The Long Gray Line*. Mr. Atkinson gives a riveting account of the West Point class of 1966, a class incredibly impacted by the Vietnam War. Regarding my second concern, West Point does an excellent job of selecting rotating staff and faculty that represents a myriad of demographics- not just race and sex but also commissioning source, branch of the Army and academic background. My Tac cohorts represented the best young leaders in the Army and were truly a cross section of every "flavor" of Army officer. The bottom line- I quickly overcame my apprehensions and enjoyed the immersion into a rigorous academic environment.

The first writing assignment for your consideration was the culminating effort for LD 720 "The American Military Experience and USMA" and one of the benchmark research papers of the TOEP graduate program. The purpose of the course was to provide Tac officers a deep understanding of USMA's role in our nation's history. Even my Tac cohort friends who were USMA grads found the course insightful. Above all, the following paper was one of the more enjoyable academic works I have completed in my academic career.

The requirements for this paper were completed

simultaneously with other rigorous graduate level courses within the 15 month accelerated academic calendar. Additionally, our professors, USMA history “P’s”, as the cadets call them, were legendary for strict adherence to research standards, format and writing. Our professors required a well thought out research plan prior to their approval of our chosen topics. Perhaps because I enjoyed *The Long Gray Line* so much, my proposed research topic explored what, if any, did the Vietnam antiwar effort have on USMA operations? I also believe the choice of this topic is perhaps a small glimpse of a direct leader beginning his transition to organizational leadership and starting to understand there is a multitude of factors which can impact an organization.

As you examine the following pages, keep in mind the lens through which they were written. A 30 year old Army Captain recently re-deployed who up until then, had never really stopped to reflect on all the different influences on organizations and leaders. I believe if you look closely, you can see hints of a leader who is coming to the realization that leadership (or life in general) is not always transactional (i.e. I say it you do it, or else) and governed by strict, mostly linear hierarchy as we commonly experience while serving as young direct leaders.

There are a multitude of influences on leaders and led which affect each individual differently. My conclusion in the paper (*spoiler alert*) is the antiwar movement did not significantly impact the core mission of the United States Military Academy but did touch individuals- cadets, staff and faculty in a myriad of ways. I didn’t realize it when writing the paper, but USMA weathered the “war at home” because it has arguably one of the richest organizational cultures in our nation. The academy (albeit on a grand scale) is a perfect example of the type of outfit every organizational leader should strive to establish. In just a few short years after writing this paper, it would be my responsibility as an organizational leader to ensure my Army unit could also weather detracting influences.

This paper, although time consuming, was truly enjoyable to research and write. Perhaps it was because it hit close to

home as a recently returned combat vet or maybe it was just really interesting subject matter! Regardless, as I reflect back on my career, it is one of the writing assignments that certainly helped develop me as a leader. I hope you enjoy reading this research paper as much as I enjoyed writing it and get your first glimpse into the development of a direct leader transitioning to organizational leadership.

The Long Gray Line and an Unpopular War: West Point During the Vietnam Conflict

From 1968 to 1971 Vietnam anti-war sentiment steadily grew in the United States. America's prosecution of the Vietnam War touched thousands of homes across the country both directly and indirectly with antiwar sentiment becoming a part of everyday life during the late 1960's. Centered around but not ultimately restricted to the nation's colleges and universities, the antiwar movement was the vocal, visible, and sometimes violent outlet for antiwar sentiment and it was able to affect many changes in American culture, society, and, some would say, foreign policy. But could the antiwar movement touch the rockbound highland walls of America's military academy? Did growing antiwar sentiment that many argue helped to end the war and kept political leaders from escalating it affect academy operations? If not antiwar sentiment, then what did cause change at one of America's most steadfast institutions during America's most unpopular war?

Although antiwar sentiment enveloped the nation by 1971 and affected social as well as political change, it did not cause any significant change to the admission numbers, curriculum, operations, or ideals of the United States Military Academy. The faculty, staff, and cadets at the academy were more affected by combat action during the Vietnam War itself than antiwar sentiment and overwhelming unpopularity of the war. The geographic location, 150 years of tradition, and principles from which the institution was created helped to keep the "rockbound highland home" of the Corps of Cadets shielded from many of the influences that significantly changed other academic institutions of the period.

In order to fully appreciate the potential catalysts for change to which the academy was exposed from 1968 to 1971 one must first understand the different expressions of antiwar sentiment. By 1971 Vietnam was the most unpopular war in American history with the antiwar sentiment expressed in two distinct ways. First, a "silent majority" of Americans did not openly protest the war but acknowledged through various polls and opinion surveys that they felt the war was a "mistake."

Second, a much more visible antiwar movement displayed their discontent by actively protesting the war.² Not as visible or vocal as the antiwar movement, but just as important, it is worthy to first discuss the "silent majority" of Americans who disapproved of the conflict but did not take to the streets in protest.

In 1965 only 24% of Americans surveyed in a Gallup poll that asked "do you think Vietnam is a mistake?" replied that they felt it was. By 1971 61% of Americans who were asked the same question acknowledged that Vietnam was a mistake who were asked the same question acknowledged that Vietnam was a mistake.³ What caused the shift in opinion? Unlike the antiwar movement that often based its opposition to the war on grounds of morally questionable U.S. goals and opposition to the selective service system, the silent majority of Americans became disillusioned by battlefield losses, human losses, and the seemingly impending defeat. This was the first war of attrition that the United States participated in with no clear path to victory and many felt the U.S. was about to lose its first war. Positive public opinion for the war dropped most notably when the U.S. suffered great losses on the battlefield after the 1968 Tet Offensive, but was not negatively affected by other major events in the war such as the 1970 My Lai massacre, the 1970 "incursions" into Cambodia, or the 1972 bombing of Hanoi during which the antiwar movement surged.⁴

Another interesting fact taken from the Gallup polls and opinion surveys which counters a popular misconception of antiwar sentiment, is that the American public who silently disapproved of the war included not only older generations aged over 50 years but also those who had received only grade school educations.⁵ Although this "silent majority" of Americans who by 1971 disapproved of the war didn't take an active role in attempting to change American policy, their presence cannot be ignored. This silent majority were the family and friends of West

² Howard Schuman, "Two Sources of Antiwar Sentiment in America" in *The Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. Walter L. Hixson. (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 127.

³ Schuman, 128.

⁴ Schuman, 135-136.

⁵ Schuman, 141.

Point cadets in the late 60's and played important roles in shaping the cadets' experience and influencing their decision making processes much more than the activists.

While the silent majority of antiwar sentiment played an invisible but important role in the shaping of America, the estimated 6,000,000 Americans who took to the streets and actively protested the war from 1965 - 1972 became the focal point and lasting image of American antiwar sentiment during the Vietnam conflict.⁶ Begun by the children of the "baby boom" whose immediate forefathers survived and were molded by the Great Depression and World Wars, the Vietnam anti-war movement was born at a time of great affluence in the nation and a time when the ongoing Cold War was raising new questions about civil liberties and democracy.⁷ These "baby boomers" were the first TV generation, highly idealized and were under the general impression that their forefathers had "made a mess of the world" and had brought the world to a "sorry state of affairs."⁸ Activism and idealism were not foreign concepts in the 1960's.

Protests against America's involvement in the World Wars were precursors to the Vietnam movement. The beatniks of the 1950's, forerunners of the hippies, were already embracing many of the values that came to symbolize many Vietnam War protestors. During the early 1960's many college students were already becoming increasingly active and interested in the civil rights movement. Add to this the beginning of "megaversities" spread around the country where growing enrollments made students feel more like numbers than learners and the conditions were set for the largest antiwar movement the nation had ever known.⁹

The antiwar "warriors" whose campaigning season typically began in the early fall and carried into the spring (in order to

⁶ Melvin Small, *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds*, (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 2002), 3.

⁷ Benjamin T. Harrison, "Roots of the Anti-Vietnam War Movement," in the *Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. Walter L. Hixson. (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 23.

⁸ Harrison, 24, 27.

⁹ Harrison, 30 -34. "Megaversities" is a term Harrison uses to describe large universities with enrollment of thousands of students.

coincide with the school year) launched their first "battle" at Washington, D.C. in the spring of 1965. This first major antiwar protest drew 20,000 activists and was sponsored by the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), a large and well-established activist organization.¹⁰ As was typical for all of the protests in the 1960's, the demonstration was marked by a diversity of participants with a few well-known leaders who communicated well amongst their respective organizations as well as with overseas counterparts.¹¹ Initially the Johnson administration ignored the protestors but just as the troop strength in Vietnam had grown from 60,000 in 1965 to half a million in 1968, so did the antiwar movement.¹² Protests with ten thousand or more participants became commonplace and continued across the country in large cities and on college campuses.

The largest demonstrations of the war included 100,000 protestors in Washington during October 1967 and a quarter million protesters in both Washington and New York in 1969. Oddly enough the largest demonstration of the movement and the largest demonstration in the nation's history occurred two years after the movement peaked in 1969. On April 24, 1971 an estimated half million protestors mostly middle class, first time protestors, and a large portion of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) descended the steps of the capitol in Washington, D.C.¹³ By 1972 with troop strength in Vietnam almost completely redeployed, the antiwar movement began to dwindle and eventually ended by the fall of Saigon on 30 April 1975.¹⁴

Neither President Johnson nor Nixon allowed the movement to pass without a fight. Both administrations used various methods to contain the antiwar movement. Thousands of police, FBI, and National Guard carefully monitored and occasionally repelled large demonstrations in Washington. Protester clashes with authorities almost always ended with arrests and

¹⁰ Small, 26.

¹¹ Charles DeBenedetti, "A CIA Analysis of the Anti-Vietnam War Movement: October 1967," in *The Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. Walter L. Hixson, (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000), 119.

¹² Small, 30.

¹³ Small, 142.

¹⁴ Small, 159.

occasionally with extreme violence. In May 1970, the Ohio National Guard responded violently to protestors at Kent State who burned down the ROTC building in protest of the beginning of U.S. "incursions" into Cambodia. At the end of the day four students were dead and nine wounded by shots fired from the National Guard with no real explanation of how or why it happened. Although this incident caused a tremendous uproar at universities across the nation, causing 448 colleges to close for varying times and the government to become actively involved in returning the nation's campuses to normalcy, for the most part the event did not have a deep and lasting impact on the majority of the American public.¹⁵

The media's coverage of demonstrations always included a majority of footage and reporting on the violent, hippie, or extreme left wing participants rather than the majority of the protestors who were for the most part normal looking and behaving college students.¹⁶ Although this focus attracted more viewers and sold more papers, it also played into the hands of the administrations and had an impact on the "silent majority" watching at home. The silent majority, although opposed to the war, did not want to be lumped into the same category as the people they saw on T.V.

This antiwar "war" had an extensive propaganda campaign on both sides. Both the Nixon and Johnson administrations manipulated the media to portray the worst image possible of the antiwar movement and its leaders. Beyond the publishing of flyers and speeches the antiwar movement responded with a propaganda campaign of its own called the Unsell project. Arriving late in the movement during 1970 this project ultimately produced 125 print ads, 33 television commercials and 31 radio spots at a cost of over \$1 million dollars which was largely donated by supporters both in the advertising and media industries.¹⁷ Both the antiwar movement and the administration realized the importance of swaying the "silent majority" in the

¹⁵ Small, 123.

¹⁶ Small, 35, 81.

¹⁷ Mitchell Hall, "Unsell the War: Vietnam and Antiwar Advertising," in *The Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, ed. Walter L. Hixson, (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000) 224.

battle for public opinion. By 1971 the silent majority opposed the war but this had less to do with either side's propaganda campaigns than the reality of battlefield losses occurring in Vietnam.

In no single area did the Presidential administrations direct more efforts against the antiwar movement than in the intelligence arena. Several CIA and FBI operations attempted to uncover connections between key leaders of the movement and the communist party as well as to create dissension by planting counter-subversives within the ranks.¹⁸ Although agents discovered that many protestors had "close Communist associations...but [did] not appear to be under Communist direction,"¹⁹ the movement's connections and semi-regular communications with the North Vietnamese regime were detrimental to the winning of the hearts and minds of the "silent majority." The Hanoi government often wrote encouraging letters to antiwar movement leaders that were often made public and became prime targets for the government's propaganda program.²⁰ Having many of the same characteristics as a shooting war, the antiwar "war" enveloped the nation from 1965 to 1972, which raises an obvious question- who won the "war at home?"

The victor of this antiwar war cannot be identified by easily quantifiable means. Melvin Small suggests that the antiwar movement actually only affected presidential decision making twice; once when after the 1967 demonstrations in Washington President Johnson was forced to launch a public relations campaign to keep the "silent majority" in favor of the war and again in July of 1969 when Nixon did not retaliate with the reintroduction of ground troops to Hanoi's refusal to comply to demands.²¹ Some could argue the movement was the driving force for Johnson to announce in March 1968 that there would be no further escalation of the war or that it kept Nixon from re-escalating the war even if he had wanted to and that it forced him to do away with the selective service system in 1973. Yet these statements cannot be proven.

¹⁸ Small, 32.

¹⁹ DeBenedetti, 119.

²⁰ Small, 36.

²¹ Small, 161 - 162.

Two facts are known about the antiwar movement and the war. The first is that the loss of the Vietnam War was a result of poor decision-making at the strategic and operational levels of war and not because of the antiwar movement. Second, the "war at home" was very real and both presidents of the period had to effectively address it in order to continue the war in Vietnam.²² But what impact, if any, did the "war at home" and the battle for the support of the silent majority have on the United States Military Academy?

Antiwar sentiment grew steadily from 1968 to 1972 within the corps just as it did in the nation's "silent majority" from which the cadets were born. However, unlike at major universities across the nation, antiwar sentiment and the movement did not significantly change the corps' ideals, curriculum, operations, or enrollment during the "war at home." Like their counterparts at civilian universities, the cadets of the late 1960's were the offspring of an affluent generation. The first TV generation and highly idealistic, but the similarities stopped there. The ideals espoused by the cadets of West Point were much different than their civilian counterparts. Still moved by stirring speeches from both General of the Army Douglas MacArthur and President Kennedy in the early 1960's, Duty, Honor, Country became the motto for each class during the war and beyond.

This was not for a lack of trying on the part of the antiwar movement. On several occasions the establishment of the academy "buted heads" with civilian counterparts, or as author Rick Atkinson put it, "the academy's geographical isolation helped protect it from the rudest attacks on the war and the military establishment, but even so, the place at times resembled a fortress under siege."²³ Only a few "direct assaults" actually occurred on the hallowed grounds of the academy, the most visible of which was in fall of 1969 when one hundred Vassar College students from nearby Poughkeepsie, NY came to the academy to "preach peace and distribute daisies."²⁴ The protesters left the post frustrated by their inability to win debates with the

²² Small, 163.

²³ Rick Atkinson, *The Long Gray Line*, (London: Collins, 1990), 347.

²⁴ Atkinson, 349.

well-informed cadets and to visibly sway cadets to their cause.²⁵

More often than not cadets felt the impact of the antiwar "war" when they left the security of West Point. Upper classmen who were authorized off-post privileges often kept long wigs to wear on the weekends to "blend in" with their civilian friends in order to minimize the chance of jeers from protesters.²⁶ Lieutenant General Graves, a Vietnam veteran, member of the faculty during this period, and later superintendent of the academy, reflected in an interview with the academy historian about experiences in 1970:

When we took the debate team to competition, sometimes we put them in blazers...because they "suffered" if they arrived on some of the campuses in uniform."²⁷

He later explains "suffering" as jeers and an occasional hurled egg.²⁸ The perpetrators of these acts were not always students. LTG Graves related a moment during a debate team event when a cadet remarked that "he didn't want to be a social liability" and the opposing college's debate coach retorted with "cadet, you are already a social liability."²⁹ These clashes with those openly opposed to the war and the institution of the academy did little to affect the ideals of the cadets or change the institution of the academy. If anything, much like the "silent majority" of America from which they came, the cadets were unified by acts of rudeness from antiwar protestors. More importantly, the cadets were only truly affected by what was going on around them on the grounds of the academy itself and the battlefields of Vietnam.

Cadets from 1965 to 1971 were immersed in an institution that was undergoing numerous core structural changes. Some scholars argue that the intensity, number, and rapidity of the changes going on during the period, coupled with the dissension that grew in the Army from America's first defeat during Vietnam, contributed to the honor scandals that plagued the

²⁵ Atkinson, 349.

²⁶ Atkinson, 349.

²⁷ LTG Howard Graves, interview by Dr. Steve Grove, United States Military Academy Historian, 10 MAY 1996, 9.

²⁸ Graves, 10.

²⁹ Graves, 10.

academy during the mid-1970's.³⁰ The most visible changes to the academy occurred in the size of the corps, the integration of a larger number of minorities, and physical changes to the academy facilities. In February 1964, Congress authorized an increase in the size of the corps from 2,529 to 4,417. With this came authorization to construct facilities as necessary to accommodate the change. The new target strength was realized in 1972 and all new constructions were completed by 1974.³¹ Numerous construction projects of barracks, academic, and post support facilities began in 1965 and completed during the early 1970's gave the academy a new look.³² But how did an unpopular war affect an institution trying to almost double its size? Statistical admission data shows that there was no shortage of nominated applicants for USMA classes 1968' through 1974' in comparison to the classes of 1960' to 1967'.³³ New cadets who were admitted during this time period held the same SAT scores, class rank and participation in high school varsity athletics as their predecessors.³⁴ Attrition of cadets during this period, were due to resignations versus punitive separations. This caused the academy to institute military career classes, as part of a cadet's military education but this attrition cannot be clearly linked to antiwar sentiment.³⁵

Another very important change to the corps during this time was the increasing number of minorities admitted. As late as 1968 there were only thirty black cadets in the academy, but this was soon to change.³⁶ A minority officer placed in the admissions department had the mission to attract minorities. The mission was successful and by the end of 1971 there were just under 100 blacks serving in the corps and 5% of all applicants were

³⁰ Theodore J. Crackel, *West Point: A Bicentennial History*, (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 245.

³¹ Crackel, 232 - 234.

³² Crackel, 234.

³³ United States Military Academy, "Forty Year Record USMA Classes of 1960 thru 1999," (West Point, NY: West Point Printing), 1.

³⁴ United States Military Academy, "Forty Year Record USMA Classes of 1960 thru 1999," 1.

³⁵ United States Military Academy, "The Annual Report of the Superintendent," 30 June 1969, (West Point, NY: West Point Printing, 1969), 19.

³⁶ Crackel, 238.

minorities. Although this pales in comparison to the 2001 figure of 23% minority applicants, it was a significant jump in a short period. Cadets and faculty of the period adjusted successfully to the changes.³⁷ This data shows that even though antiwar sentiment may have been on the rise, the academy did not shrink in size but grew according to plan. Some could argue admission to West Point was just another means for reluctant youth of the day to dodge the draft for four more years, but unlike civilian universities graduates of West Point are guaranteed to serve making this argument highly unlikely.

The curriculum although remaining steadfastly locked to its tradition of an engineering core and ever resistant to change did adjust due to the unique nature of this war. By 1970 the first class military training included large portions of "stability operation training" as well as counter guerrilla tactics, some of which were taught by lieutenants recently returned from Vietnam.³⁸ As a sign of the times and the nation's growing new focus on civil liberties, hazing acts such as bracing were outlawed in 1969, chapel attendance was no longer mandatory in 1972, and the cadet regulation book shrunk to 1/3 of its former size in 1973.³⁹ But the single biggest influence on shaping the experience of the cadets and increasing their growing disillusionment of the war while simultaneously espousing the ideal of "duty, honor, country" were the voices of experience from Vietnam. This includes both the "voices" of recent graduates who were laid to rest in the National Cemetery and the sometimes very vocal voices of Vietnam veterans who returned to the academy as faculty and staff.

From 1965 to 1972 the academy experienced sorrowful and all too reoccurring reminders of the war. Beginning during the 1965 - 1966 academic year, funeral ceremonies became increasingly common at the West Point National Ceremony. By 1970 Jim Ford the civilian chaplain of the academy, performed up to six dozen such ceremonies sometimes surging to three per

³⁷ Crackel, 238.

³⁸ United States Military Academy, "The Annual Report of the Superintendent," 30 June 1970, 41.

³⁹ Atkinson, 440.

week.⁴⁰ In many cases Reverend Ford performed a cadet's marriage ceremony, baby baptismal, and burial all within a few years after the cadet's graduation.⁴¹ These powerful reminders of the reality of the war took an emotional toll on the corps of cadets. Rick Atkinson sums up the effect these ceremonies had on cadets and recent graduates when he summarizes Jack Wheeler's (Class of '66) thoughts after attending the funeral service of a classmate:

He wondered what a funeral would have been like in that cemetery in 1943...the trappings of grief would have been similar: the flag, the bugler, the honor guard, even the military stoicism. But would there have been that same suspicion -like an open secret too terrible to voice - that here was a young man who had died in vain? Slaughtered for nothing? Not likely.⁴²

The single biggest factor to increase the disillusionment about the war amongst the corps, the fallen soldier ceremonies spoke volumes about American failures on the battlefield but not nearly as much as the combat veterans who were returning from Vietnam to fill a variety of roles at the Academy.

Realizing the tremendous difficulty of espousing the ideals of the academy and keeping the corps focused on learning to lead rather than questioning the war, the combat veteran staff took various approaches to molding the future leaders of the Army. Recognizing early on that this was a different war and needed special consideration in order to sustain the motivation of the corps, the history department launched a program in 1966 to solicit letters from young officers in Vietnam reflecting on their combat experiences.⁴³ These letters posted in the Thayer Hall rotunda described only a positive academy, and their impact on the corps cannot easily be determined.⁴⁴ The cadets would have to learn of the negative aspects of fighting in Vietnam such as discipline problems and drug use amongst the soldiers as well as

⁴⁰ Atkinson, 278, 350.

⁴¹ Atkinson, 278, 350.

⁴² Atkinson, 303 - 304.

⁴³ James J. Carafano, "West Point at War: Officer Attitudes and the Vietnam War, 1966 - 1972," First presented at The Popular Culture Association in Montreal, Canada, 1987, page 5.

⁴⁴ Carafano

perceived careerism amongst senior officers who made mistakes at the cost of soldiers' lives from the faculty who experienced it firsthand.

Because of the already high ideals of the corps and admittedly restrictive environment there were very few acts of outright civil disobedience such as were common on civilian campuses across the country. However, there were occasional signs of protest. One such act took place in 1968 when the Secretary of Army did not allow the Army football team to compete in the Sugar Bowl, arguing that it would send the wrong message for a nation at war.⁴⁵ Cadets, assuming there was a hidden political reason for abstaining from the bowl game, protested by stealing (but later returning) over 300 sterling silver sugar bowls only after dumping the contents onto each table in Washington hall.⁴⁶

Another more crucial moment of protest that included the Superintendent occurred in 1970. Popular amongst the corps of cadets, MG Koster, a former commander of the Americal Division, addressed the corps of cadets in Washington Hall. He stated that he was under investigation for his involvement with the My Lai incident and that he had requested reassignment from West Point. After stating that he would continue to live the principles "duty, honor, country" he concluded his statement with "Don't let the bastards grind you down."⁴⁷ The cadets stood in their chairs and cheered the superintendent for 90 seconds and later that day hung a banner from Washington Hall that read "Don't Let 'em Get You Down!"⁴⁸ On 18 October the corps paid homage to the outgoing "supe" by marching past Quarters 100 and rendering an 'eyes right' command. Some cadets protested the show of support for the outgoing superintendent by keeping their head and eyes straight forward.⁴⁹

An alleged event of protest involving the staff occurred in 1970 when 66 faculty members resigned their commissions.⁵⁰ The New York Times and Time magazine did stories on the mass

⁴⁵ Ivan Prashker, *Duty, Honor, Vietnam: Twelve Men of West Point*, (New York: William Morris, 1988), 365.

⁴⁶ Prashker, 365.

⁴⁷ Atkinson, 349.

⁴⁸ Atkinson, 350.

⁴⁹ Atkinson, 350.

⁵⁰ Graves, 9.

resignations citing protest against the Vietnam War, but as LTG Graves explained these individuals were recently passed over during their second look for promotion to Major and more than likely were resigning for lack of future career potential in the Army.⁵¹

Cadets and faculty were different during the war and each department had its own way of coping with the difference between the idealistic cadets and the increasingly disillusioned combat veteran staff. LTG Graves, who returned to the academy as a senior Major and social sciences instructor in 1970, said:

I did see that the cadets were more informal; they were less compliant, or less conventional, than we were, but they were not radicalized. Many of my fellow faculty members were radicalized and while they did their job, they had a very varied value set. Many of their frustrations then became focused on the war...we were going through a great social revolution and the war was the focus for that Social revolution.⁵²

Graves goes on to further characterize the relationship between cadets and instructors:

...there was a much more informal relationship ...when we were cadets, we developed an informal relationship with instructors who we liked and with who we had rapport ...when I came back that informality was assumed, and the instructor almost had to press for a more formal relationship if he wanted it...⁵³

The staff's ability to adapt to the cadets and throw off the yoke of repression in order to foster a climate of expression was change the academy needed during this turbulent time.

From 1968 to 1971 many West Point faculty and staff skillfully recognized this need for individual expression of views and helped keep the academy afloat during tough times. One such faculty member was future Secretary of State Alexander Haig who served at the academy in 1968 and often had open

⁵¹ Graves, 9.

⁵² Graves, 9.

⁵³ Graves, 10.

discussions with senior cadets about the war.⁵⁴ Often when cadets tried to turn the conversations into discussions on geopolitical reasons for war, Haig emphasized the importance for them to just focus on being good platoon leaders.⁵⁵ This allowance of constructive self-criticism was a novel concept that was critical to the success of the academy.

Self-criticism was shunned within the force but practiced often at West Point and could be the single most reason why the academy was able to weather the storm of the "war at home" with no significant or lasting changes. Nearly one quarter of the faculty was combat experienced reserve officers. Many of them had taught at civilian universities and brought a new perspective to the argument of self-criticism and loyalty to the Army.⁵⁶ But the instructor who perhaps best embraced critical thinking towards the war was MAJ Dave Palmer. An instructor in the history department and one of the first vets to return from the war he was charged with writing the department's instructional material on the war. Rather than hedge the truth as was common in the force, MAJ Palmer did not avoid controversial issues and openly criticized American reliance on technology, firepower and the non-strategy of attrition.⁵⁷ Palmer went on to publish a book that continued his criticism of American military strategy in Vietnam. He later pinned on the stars of Lieutenant General, becoming the academy's superintendent in 1986.⁵⁸

By 1971 the Army was a shell of the victorious Army that had defeated the Nazis and Japanese in WWII. America's first wartime defeat in Vietnam, a careerist oriented officer heavy force structure, and poor discipline that permeated the ranks contributed to the decline of the Army and continued to mar its reputation throughout the early and mid-1970's until reform could turn it back into a credible organization. The academy also had to make some changes due to America's first wartime defeat in Vietnam, but the "war at home" did not significantly change the academy's enrollment, curriculum, operations or ideals. From

⁵⁴ Prashker, 305.

⁵⁵ Prashker, 306.

⁵⁶ Carafano, 17.

⁵⁷ Carafano, 19.

⁵⁸ Carafano, 20.

1968 - 1971 America endured significant change and while West Point still remained a good indicator of the America's "silent majority," it had some serious catching up to do. By the mid 1970's West Point was engaged in significant changes of its own and many have argued that the seeds for this change were sewn from 1968 to 1971 during America's most unpopular war.

The second writing from the direct leadership years for your consideration was not quite as enjoyable as the Vietnam research paper but an equally important part of my leader development. The following text was my thesis entry for the TOEP graduate program and represents the final culminating academic work of my Advanced Civil Schooling graduate school experience. In addition to the study, I defended my conclusions to a pretty tough academic panel. The assignment was well intentioned; each Tac officer conducts an academic year long observation of a cadet company's organizational culture, analyzes it through our newly developed lens attained from graduate course work and then makes recommendations for improvement. Making this capstone assignment even more beneficial, the academic year company under observation was intended to be the company the Tac would assume responsibility for upon graduation from the TOEP program giving the officer a head start on getting to know their organization and what made it tick.

Of course, in practice, nothing works out quite according to plan. First and foremost it is debatable how accurate any of the observations really are. USMA cadets are incredibly clever and also students of Edgar Schein's organizational culture theories. The interviews and surveys may be biased, especially since they have a pretty good idea you will be their new Tac. There is most likely a fair amount of telling the researcher what they want to hear. Not to mention, the just plain awkwardness of observing and documenting the actions of other humans like they are in some sort of zoological study!

Second, the tools used are rudimentary at best. The surveys and interview questions developed reflect only a years' worth of academic background in the topic. As I warned in the introduction, a true academic researcher will no doubt grimace upon reading the study and questionable conclusions in the coming pages. That being said, the ultimate purpose of USMA's TOEP program was to prepare Tac officers to lead a cadet company on their developmental journey, not create expert researchers. As long as we demonstrated fairly sound research methods and could adequately defend conclusions, we passed the assessment.

Lastly, the company I observed ended up not being the

company I assumed responsibility for upon graduation. Regardless, especially as a Tac who did not attend USMA as an undergraduate, this academic exercise provided great insight into the life of a cadet and was a very useful endeavor. Fortunately, the cadet company I studied was within the same Regiment and provided an opportunity to learn about my soon to be new boss. Additionally, the whole Edgar Schein, organizational culture lens, is a tremendous tool to have in your kit for future use when assessing organizations.

When reflecting on this study nearly two decades later, the first word that comes to my mind is regression. My observations in this study seem more focused on rules, regulations and uniformity than truly learning what made the unit click- true hallmarks of the task focused, direct leader! Key to remember, at this point I was still a direct leader *transitioning* to organizational leadership. Perhaps because the assignment was unfamiliar or out of my comfort zone I went back to what I knew.

Or perhaps, this is exactly what USMA and the TOEP program wanted! While throughout our graduate studies we were encouraged to become transformational rather than transactional leaders (inspiring the led to achieve because it is the right thing to do versus performing for fear of punishment or want of reward) there is a WHOLE LOT of transactional leadership required at USMA. At the end of the day, they may be the best and the brightest, but cadets are still college age kids prone to making the same poor decisions that any 18-22 year old red-blooded American might make. Sometimes even the best cadets will push the boundaries and must be responded to with “sticks or carrots” as the situation dictates.

Hopefully you’ll disregard the average at best research methods and poor conclusions to really analyze my leader development within this snapshot to make your own determination if I was ready to coach, mentor, and inspire our nation’s future leaders. This study marked the end of a very rigorous Army Advanced Civil Schooling graduate program and I was a better leader for it. However, I was ready to get back to troops (or cadets in this case). As valuable as writing this study was, it paled in comparison to the leader

development I would receive on the job for the next three years as a USMA tactical officer.

An Assessment of the Culture of USMA Academic Year Company D4

Introduction

Each of the 32 academic year cadet companies at the United States Military Academy exhibits its own organizational culture and conducts its own socialization. Part of the uniqueness of this institution is that it is made up of 32 very similar but distinct cultures. These cultures remain in a constant change due to the turnover in leadership, both cadet chain of command and "greensuiter" cadre. Strong institutional values and norms from the academy ensure that companies do not change excessively and evolve into counter cultures within the corps but rather create 32 slightly differing sub cultures. But what makes one company different from the other? What exactly is the organizational culture of an academic year company? To properly answer these questions one must immerse themselves in the culture by observing hours of daily activities, interactions, and the environment of the company.

The academic year company 04 commonly referred to as the "Dukes" was chosen to participate in this study. In order to accomplish this task, 20 hours of observation were completed and included both a general look at the institution in which the Dukes exist and more specific observations of the company itself. The company offered its full support of the study and participants seemed genuinely enthused to be a part of it. Edgar Schein's definition of culture and three "levels of culture" as described in his book Organizational Culture and Leadership are used to describe culture for the purposes of this study and make up the basis for the conclusions.⁵⁹ After observing the Dukes for 20 hours, it was found to have a culture that's values include individual achievement and maintaining a haze free environment, it contains no significant organizational structures or "artifacts," and it upholds the basic assumption of individual respect by striving to leave each other alone.

⁵⁹ Edgar, Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass Publishers, Inc, 1992), 12, 17.

Review of Related Literature

Three documents were used to establish the framework for this study. In addition to Schein's work, Erving Goffman's study of socialization in total institutions was used to understand the processes that occur amongst the corps of cadets who are members of the academy's total institution. Lastly, the military academy's Cadet Leader Development System or CLDS, a key component of the academy's strategic plan, was reviewed to determine what the role of an academic company is supposed to be from the institution's perspective.

While many scholars may argue cultures develop or change, few would dispute Edgar Schein's formal definition of culture or his three "levels of culture." Schein formally defines culture as:

A pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems.⁶⁰

This definition especially fits at the academy where the pressure to be the best or in some cases to just get by are tremendous. By using this definition it is easy to see why an academic company would be quick to adopt and implement aspects of a culture that it perceives to work and solve their common problems.

Although sometimes called by other names and defined slightly different by other culture researchers, Schein's three levels of culture are used to describe the three levels "to which the cultural phenomenon is visible to the observer."⁶¹ The surface level of culture is called artifacts, / which include "all the phenomena that one sees, hears, and feels when one encounters a new group with an unfamiliar culture."⁶² While this is the most visible level it is also the hardest to decipher because the meaning artifact to the members of the culture are

⁶⁰ Schein, 12.

⁶¹ Schein, 16.

⁶² Schein, 17.

often different than what it means to the observer. The second level of culture is an organizations "espoused values" which are its "strategies, goals, and philosophies," or their "espoused justifications."⁶³ These values are introduced by a leader of the organization and adopted by the members as "assumptions about what is right or wrong" and "what will work or not work."⁶⁴ Last and most importantly are what Schein calls "basic underlying assumptions" which are the "taken for granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings" that become the "ultimate source of values."⁶⁵

In his work *Asylums*, Erving Goffman defines a total institution as one that not only exhibits "encompassing tendencies" but more specifically are "symbolized by the barrier to social intercourse with the outside and to departure that is often built right into the physical plans such as locked doors, high walls, barbed wire, water, forests, or moors."⁶⁶ The United States Military Academy fits this definition to a letter not only by its remote location on the high cliff banks of the Hudson but also with its strict rules that severely limit all cadets from social interactions with the outside world. Although this study focuses on the culture of an academic year company rather than a detailed look at its socialization processes, Goffman's interesting observations of mental hospitals and military barracks contain many parallels to this study and helped the researcher to understand the socialization powers at work within the Dukes.

The CLDS document contains page after page of wording describing how to build "leader of character" and outlining "principles of officership," related to the institution's ultimate goal of creating "commissioned officers of character." However, in chapter four section three the document outlines specifically the role of the cadet company, which is to "provide the military context with which all development takes place."⁶⁷ According to the CLOS an academic company is to function in

⁶³ Schein, 17.

⁶⁴ Schein, 19.

⁶⁵ Schein, 17.

⁶⁶ Erving Goffman, *Asylums*. (New York: Anchor books, 1961), 4.

⁶⁷ United States Military Academy, *Cadet Leader Development System*, (West Point, NY: West Point printing, 2002), 45.

seven distinct roles:⁶⁸

Command and Control
Model Army Units
Administrative Support
Leadership Opportunities
Supportive Developmental Environment
Social Support
Military Environment

It is within the outline of these seven roles that this study begin its observation of academic company D4 with specific attention paid to the role of "supportive developmental environment" and "social support."

Method

The primary method used to observe both the Dukes and the corps of cadets was to attend events such as formations, class trip sections, football games, meals, and parades. Additionally both one on one and group interviews were conducted with cadets and cadre to get their own assessment of the Duke culture. Group "culture sensing sessions" were conducted with eight to ten members of each class in the company and followed the outline in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Culture Sensing Session Outline.

LD 700 Culture Assessment of D4

Date / Time:

Class:

Sensing Session Outline

I. Introduction

- Name, purpose of study
- Conduct: sensing session questions to generate discussion 30 minutes; Survey on culture NTE 15 minutes
- Completely anonymous so be forthright, limited

⁶⁸ USMA, 45-46.

confidentiality

- If fourth class discuss, PL 100 Credit, sign-up sheet, and PL 100 instructor sheet; see me afterwards
- Schein's Definition of Culture from Organizational Culture and Leadership:

II. Sensing Session (The three levels of Culture) Artifacts, Espoused Values, Basic Underlying Assumptions (10 minutes each)

- Describe some of the artifacts of the Dukes- visible organizational structures and processes; awards, bulletin boards, day to day practices etc...

- What are the Dukes Espoused values- Strategies goals philosophies (espoused justifications); study hard, play hard, work hard, drill is most important etc...

- What are the Basic Underlying Assumptions, beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings (ultimate source of values and action) within the Dukes? (Example: “he wears the ABN badge so he is squared away”, “she is prior service so she knows what’s going on”)

Please complete the survey, leave face down and you may depart. If you need credit for PL 100 see me afterwards. Thank you!!

Additionally, in an attempt to get more candid responses and reduce researcher biases during the interview process each cadet who participated in the sensing session was given the anonymous culture questionnaire in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Culture Questionnaire.

D4 Culture Survey

I am conducting a cultural assessment of an academic year cadet company as a final project for LD 700 (Organizational Culture). As part of the assessment, I am conducting this

sensing session and short survey. This form is completely anonymous and I ask that each of you answer these questions candidly and openly. I appreciate the time and effort you are taking to assist during this research!

CPT Norman D. Spivey

Year Group/Class of ____

Prior Service: Yes or No

Gender: Male or Female

1. In our sensing session we used a textbook definition of culture to assess the culture of the Dukes. Using your own definition of culture, what is your assessment of the Dukes culture?
2. What factors have recently changed or are now changing the culture of the Dukes?
3. Is the culture of the Dukes a large or small part of your leader development here at USMA? Explain.
4. What would you like to see changed in the Duke's culture?

Please feel free to write any other comments you may have on the culture of the Dukes

Observations and interviews were recorded both in field notes and on cassette. The Dukes had a population of 120 cadets assigned at the time of the study and of this population a sample of 32 cadets, including 3 females completed the group sensing session and individual questionnaire. Individual interviews were completed with a cadet in the same regiment but different company as well as with the Duke's Tactical officer, and the Duke's cadet First Sergeant.

Characters.

The main character of this study is the cadet him/herself. Before diving into an assessment of the Duke's culture, one must observe cadets in their natural habitat. Because they live for the most part a cloistered existence, this is a relatively easy

task. Although remaining nameless and only viewed briefly, the observation of hundreds of cadets participating in daily activities such as class field trips, football games, and eating in the dining facility was critical to understanding the culture of the Dukes. Additionally, one on one interviews with a cadet from the same regiment but assigned to a different company helped clarify corps wide values and artifacts.

As stated in the introduction, an academic year company's culture is in a perpetual state of change due to personnel turnover and the Dukes are no exception to this rule. Both the Tac officer and NCO, the organization's legal leaders, are in their first year on the job. The Duke's cadet commander was relieved for medical reasons during the course of this study. This rare occurrence visibly affected the organization. Fortunately for the unit the cadet First Sergeant, a junior, was eager and motivated to fill the leader vacuum until a new commander could be brought on board. This critical episode in Duke history will be described in more detail later in the study.

The cadets who participated in the sensing sessions and surveys were picked by the cadet chain of command, however they did not seem as if they were planted for the study. All cadets and cadre interviewed gave straightforward answers and seemed to feel participation in this could in some way help stabilize their organization's culture.

Observations and Analysis.

In order to fully understand the institution in which the Dukes exist, the first observations conducted were of normal cadet events outside of the realm of the Dukes. The purpose of these observations were to understand cadet behavior in academic, social, and military settings. An academic setting with a military "flavor" provided the first backdrop to begin this study of cadet culture.

During the "cow" or junior year history class, all cadets complete a walking tour or "staff ride" of the West Point post and give brief lectures to their classmates at critical points on the tour discussing West Point's role in Revolutionary War history. The class of juniors is further divided into sections that consist of approximately 20 to 25 cadets each. Since this is a

military "staff ride", cadets were required to wear their Load Bearing Equipment (LBE) and the battle dress uniform which is a deviation from the standard uniform that is normally worn daily.

As the cadets began their tour, the first most striking observation was the lack of uniformity in their dress. It was obvious the cadets, who came from different companies, all had different standards for the configuration and wear of the LBE. Additionally the wear of their patrol caps and polish of their boot indicated that wear of the BDU uniform is not as familiar to cadets as the normal class uniform. As the section moved from site to site a couple of cadets lagged back invoking the ire of their professor. These participants were the exception and most cadets at least feigned interest. Cadets conducting the briefings did so with varying degrees of enthusiasm, indicating a level of discipline that may not be found in other 20 year olds in the same circumstances. During the short ferry ride to the field site on Constitution Island, the majority of cadets slept while some engaged in small talk amongst themselves. Upon conclusion of the walking tours, the history sections quickly broke up and each cadet ran to make their mandatory lunch formation with their own academic company.

Other than their increased discipline that aided their ability to maintain (or at least feign) interest, this history class exhibited no special attitudes or values that would differentiate them from a history class that would differentiate them from a history class at another major university. Their unfamiliarity with the battle dress uniform and LBE shows that the wear of these items is something the corps of cadets doesn't practice often preferring the dressiness and tradition of the cadet gray uniform.

College football remains one of America's favorite pastimes and the Military Academy is no exception. Home game days at West Point contain ceremony and tradition that have endured for generations of graduates. Each game day begins with a parade of the corps of cadets on the plain followed by the corps collectively marching to Michie stadium to watch the game. During this particular Saturday match up against East Carolina University, the weather was perfect for the corps to execute the

pageantry of the parade and attend the game.

As the 32 companies assembled in one of the four regimental areas before the parade, cadets seemed genuinely unenthused and somewhat apathetic about the event. Wide-eyed lower classmen fumbled with their uniforms to make corrections as cows inspected them. The seniors or "firsties" huddled in small groups chattering and seemed genuinely unconcerned about the events. There was not a large presence of "green suiters" checking the cadets they are legally responsible for and for the most part the entire proceedings were being overseen by the few upperclassmen present. Some companies had difficulty achieving the required five ranks of eight personnel each and cadets were distributed within the regiments to achieve the desired size. Since it was the academy's homecoming, a larger than usual crowd had gathered to observe the parade and the cadets did not disappoint. Somehow within the ten minutes it took from leaving the companies in their assembly areas to taking up a position in the observation area, the corps had managed to pull together their seeming disorganization into a fine display of military pageantry. The corps' performance during this event again spoke volumes of the corps discipline by their ability pull off such an event with so many noticeably disinterested participants.

As the fans and cadets filed into the bleachers, Michie stadium took on the persona of a college football arena with the obvious exception being that the majority of the fans were wearing military uniforms. While the game got off to a promising start, unfortunately the Army team began its backwards slide towards defeat. Nevertheless the game contained the trappings of a normal college event with cheerleaders, mascots, and screaming but slightly more subdued fans.

In the cadet portion of the bleachers, each company had their members waving and cheering loudly, but with a quick count one could easily see that the cadet section did not contain close to the nearly 2000 cadets who had marched over. Around the stadium cadets had splintered off chatting in small groups, or in some cases just walking around. Again there was a

majority of genuine disinterest in the game. Could this be a factor of a continuing poor season from the football team or does disinterest permeate even this most sacred artifact of academy culture?

Before immersing in the world of the Dukes, a one on one interview with a cadet from another company validated growing assumptions about the corps and its espoused values. The cadet a senior or firstie from fourth regiment volunteered to meet with the research for a mutual mentorship relationship. Over the course of four sessions, both his concerns about his impending future as an Army officer and the values of the corps were addressed. When asked about perceptions that there was a very real division amongst the experiences of the long suffering lower classmen and the upperclassmen (additionally partitioned by an uninvolved first class) he generally agreed with this assumption and described it briefly. To summarize his thoughts, he felt the corps definitely succumbs to the "nature of the beast."

It is generally known and accepted upon entrance of a new cadet that due to the academic load and the demanding requirements of cadet life the freshmen (plebe) and sophomore (yuck) years "suck." A period of relative military and leader development occurs during the cow year and then with added liberties rivaling that of a regular college student, a cadet quietly rides through their firstie year. This seems to be the accepted streetwise progression for a cadet's experience at the academy. This model doesn't fit everyone, but cadets such as this one who seem genuinely proud of the institution and what it stands for succumb to this model not by their own choosing but by falling prey to the "nature of the beast."

To begin the observation of the Dukes, one must take a look at where they live and physically spend over half of their 47-month academy experience. It is worthy to point out that the freshman class or "plebes" are exempted from this rule since they are scrambled after their first year to another company in order to give them a fresh perspective on leadership methods and cultures. Located in MacArthur "short" barracks on the 4th floor and only a stone's throw away from the superintendent's quarters, the Duke living environment

does not stick out amongst the other companies in the corps but there are some small differences. The Dukes and the seven other companies in 4th Regiment, do not have Tac officer and NCO offices located on their living floor, but rather on the "green mile" of the first floor. This is unique in the corps and although it has been this way for a number of years, by next academic year the Tac offices will be located on the floors with their companies.

Another physical characteristic of the Duke's living space is their apparent lack of bulletin board use. Boards are present but are either empty or contain dated material. The Duke's prefer daily e-mails called "Duke Notes" to pass information and keep each other informed. There was only one plaque hanging on the wall, a leadership award created last year in memory of a fallen Duke, but only a few of the 32 members of the Dukes interviewed knew about the award or what it stood for. Each cadet's door is uniquely labeled with his or her name and own personal touch but don't differ greatly from one cadet to another.

Guided by the cadet first sergeant through some of the cadet's rooms, the feeling of discipline again prevailed. During this surprise inspection through rooms of varying class members, there were no visible signs of unauthorized carpets, posters, or decorations in the rooms but rather neat and tidy places of sleep and study. Additionally the Duke common areas such as the charge of quarters and study rooms were clean and organized but somewhat bland with no posters or motivational artifacts present. Whether these findings were by design or not could be disputed but as stated earlier, throughout this study there was never a feeling that events or people were preparing for observation.

During 0630 formation on the Saturday morning before the East Carolina game, the Dukes sleepily fell into breakfast formation and took accountability. Worthy to note the Dukes were the only company in the regiment where both the Tac officer and NCO were present. The Tac NOC was scolding a cadet at the back of the formation for an apparent infraction that had been discovered by the duty officer on the previous night. As the Dukes filed into Washington Hall for breakfast

and food was brought to the table an important part of Duke culture became apparent. While the plebes prepared drinks and food for the upperclassmen per academy, the tasks were accomplished very quickly and with no "hazing." The other tables in the company were no exception. While other companies in the vast hall had shouting, barking orders, and reporting in loud voices, the Dukes consumed their meals noticeably quickly and quietly. The cadet first sergeant explained, "we like to eat" and also provided the first indication that the Dukes were not a "haze" company. The headquarters platoon leader, a firstie, also stated that the Dukes were not a "hot" company and both of these junior leaders in the organization seemed to take pride in this fact.

Later that day as the company prepared for the parade, again the Dukes were the only cadet company with both Tac NCO and officer present. Like each company in the corps, the cows in the Duke's ranks scrambled to get the lower classman in proper uniform with assistance from the Tacs. Filling the ranks to the required number was another challenge the Duke's faced as time for the parade drew near. The majority of the firsties observed with disinterest as the cadet NCOs handled most of the pre-parade inspection duties. This event took place shortly after the cadet commander was relieved with a replacement not yet named so an acting commander presided over the proceedings. As the company uncoiled from its assembly area and took to the plain with the rest of the corps they looked as good as any other, but the Tac officer quickly pointed out that the firsties were out of step. Despite the turmoil in preparing for the parade and the lack of a cadet commander, the Dukes performed adequately and accomplished the mission. This fact speaks volumes about the dedication of a few junior leaders who are eager to see the unit succeed and the benefit of concerned and involved "greensuit" leadership.

The interview process started at the top of the Duke organization with comments from the Tac officer, the legal commander of the unit. A new Tac in his third month of Tac duties, this officer provided his initial assessment of an organization it is his duty to shape and develop over the next three years. He started by stating that the Dukes have a tradition of academic excellence

and held the highest GPA in the corps for the past three years, which maintaining is definitely one of his priorities. He felt, the company self-described as a "no hazing" company, contributed to low cohesion and a lack of esprit de corps. When asked to produce a copy of any Duke specific standard operating procedures, the Tac stated that there were none and only the corps of cadet policies and regulations were adhered to. During this interview and subsequent ones the recurring issue that troubled this new Tac officer the most was the perceived lack of involvement of the first class as well as their persistent use of "leadership by e-mail." As each interview began this became the topic of discussion on how he was attempting to impose his will and that of the corps on the firsties in his organization who had obviously succumbed to the "nature of the beast."

In order to maximize the interview process and meet as many cadets as possible the cadet chain of command provided eight to ten cadets from each class for a group "culture sensing session" where they had the opportunity to both speak to the researcher and write their feelings on Duke culture under the condition of anonymity. The first group of cadets to participate in this session came from the plebe class whose perspective is somewhat unusual considering they will leave the ranks of the Dukes upon completion of the academic year. Eight all male cadets showed up on time in the Duke's study room and offered their view of the organization's culture. The resounding theme of both the discussions and the anonymous survey were that the Duke's espoused individual achievement in academic excellence, were not a "haze" company, and most importantly, they absolutely didn't want to leave the unit. Unlike a majority of the plebe class who's suffering at the academy is legendary, these young men seemed to actually enjoy being a part of the Dukes. Every verbal and written response indicated they wanted to stay in the Dukes because of the perceived good life they enjoyed versus their comrades who were enduring in the "hot" or "haze" companies. They felt they were provided ample time and resources to achieve academic excellence and they enjoyed the notoriety that the Dukes held in this area.

They cited only two significant artifacts, one being the "geek of the week" award which is a weekly recognition during company formation of the cadet who achieves the best academic scores. The second being the Duke mascot itself (a plebe dressed as John Wayne) whose act of throwing around a jock strap and doing a "duke 'em" at football games seems to bring the cadets enjoyment and comic relief. These plebes felt that there is a basic underlying assumption of individual respect and that each member of the Dukes are expected to pull their weight. Although they felt that the company was a place they could learn and grow they did feel that the unit should become more cohesive by having more unit functions unlike the last cook out during which no one really participated.

Although the yearling class also made surprisingly upbeat comments about the organizational culture of the Dukes, they offered somewhat more objective points of view. The nine cadets including one female repeated almost to the word the plebe's comments on Duke culture by remarking the Dukes are "more individualized, each person has the ability to succeed here with minimum interference" but also that "group camaraderie amongst the company and classes is poor." The yearlings stated that attempts to create a cohesive environment such as movie nights and unit cookouts were unsuccessful and they recognized that the events surrounding the cadet commander's relief were not a positive event for the company. They cited there was "no tradition, just get in your room and study" and they pointed out only the same artifacts as the plebe class. The yearlings offered a slightly more cynical view than the plebes. It is important to remember they have only been a part of this organization for a little over three months. Although they liked the no-haze, low threat environment that espouses individual achievement, they seemed to feel that something was missing. Perhaps it was the esprit de corps and unit cohesion the Tac officer had spoken of earlier.

The eight cows interviewed adhered too many of the themes already discussed but took an increasingly more cynical tone. As one cadet wrote in her own words about Duke culture:

We are a company that stresses individual tasks and

achievement. Because of emphasis on the self, we do not do as much subordinate training as we should and generally are not all that tough with our subordinates. People in the company try to keep to themselves and focus on their own tasks.

Also for the first time there was mention of the new Tac officer and NCO as well as the perceived harsh enforcement of regulations and punishments, which apparently is a new concept for these one-year veterans of the Duke organization. The turnover of personnel and more importantly changing of the cadet commander were all issues the junior cadets cited as detrimental to Duke culture. They cited only one new artifact, "Duke notes" the companies e-mail information system. Like the yearlings, cows seemed to long for more cohesion and socialization. As one cadet put it, "people in the company focus on their own academics and don't socialize much." The cows offered more critical comments but none that distinctly separated it from the first two classes interviewed.

Duke firsties have spent three years as members of the organization and have experienced more Duke culture than any other class. Perhaps for this reason the cynicism reached its peak in the comments of the seven cadets who participated in the study. There were no additional comments about artifacts, but when asked about the leadership award mentioned earlier some of the cadets were unaware of its existence. Like the three classes before them, the firsties stated the Dukes valued individual achievement and some even went so far to describe Duke culture as "impersonal". Most comments about respecting individual rights by not hazing and "leaving each other alone" were cast in a positive light and unlike the other classes there didn't seem to be a desire to come together as a cohesive element. However, one firstie stated that there is a culture of "not accepting the yuks" and went on to say "it causes a firstie, cow vs. yuk, plebe mentality which is detrimental (to the company)."

The firsties did introduce a new theme by stating they felt the new Tac team is trying to change the culture of the Dukes from an individual academic focus to one that encompasses individual achievement in the military and physical pillars of the academy. All seven agreed the driving force behind the

change was the Tac NCO, who the cadets seem to particularly dislike because of his recommendation of stiff punishments for not meeting prescribed standards. Most negative comments were directed towards the Tac team and how their involvement with the running of the Duke organization is changing the culture. Oddly the relief of the cadet commander (their own classmate) was not addressed. The firsties comments confirmed that the Dukes are an organization undergoing change and at least as they see it, the changes are not very enjoyable.

Conclusions.

The Dukes espoused values of individual achievement and no hazing, they don't have significant artifacts to provide structure to the organization, and the basic underlying assumption of the organization is that you'll be left alone to pull your own weight. Contrary to what many of its members may feel, the Dukes have a very well defined culture. Many of the younger cadets mistakenly feel the lack of social events and camaraderie is a lack of culture. They don't realize that the very fact they recognize that "the Dukes are an academic company that doesn't haze" indicates that it has a very well developed culture. Unlike the younger cadets the cows and firsties recognize this more easily but also identified the organization is undergoing change. Whether the catalysts for these changes are the wishes of the new Tac team or influences from changes in the corps cannot be easily identified without comparing the Dukes with one or more companies from throughout the corps.

The biggest challenge the Dukes face is that it possesses a rapidly changing culture but the members do not understand why. Being noted as the top academic company out of 32 for the past three years is an admirable accomplishment. Duke culture undoubtedly contributed to this achievement and Dukes are understandably proud of the title. It is uncertain whether the ongoing changes to Duke culture will enable them to retain its relatively long title as the best academic company. If cultural changes fail to enable the organization to achieve this title again and doesn't adequately re-establish its values as an academic company that doesn't haze the culture of the organization will change and resultantly, so could its

performance.

Recommendations

Cadets must understand there is a culture present and functioning within the Dukes. Training with the cadet chain of command to discuss the values, artifacts and assumptions of the Dukes could help "get the word out" that what younger cadets think is a poorly cohesive unit that lacks esprit de corps is in fact an organization with well-defined values of individual achievement and "leaving cadets alone" to accomplish their assigned tasks. If company leadership (cadet and greensuiter) deems that the values need to change, then the members of the organization are due an explanation as to why and how. Sometimes an eagerness to fix the unbroken could hurt an organization more than help it.

The single biggest threat to the Duke culture is its lack of significant artifacts to include organizational practices. Cadets value being a "no haze" company, but the organization has lost some of the practices that uphold the basic traditions of the academy. Although it could be argued that hazing might decrease the conducive environment for successful individual achievement, done in moderation it could also significantly increase the organizational cohesiveness, a strongly desired attribute for military organizations. This should be monitored carefully, due to the potential for it to back fire and change the culture into a "hot" company that loses its fostering of individuality and basic assumption of "leaving alone" cadets to achieve. With the addition of some well thought out organizational practices and structured operations to pass down to future members of the Dukes, the organization can ensure that it retains its core values and continues to succeed academically in the future.

CHAPTER 3

Transition to Organizational Leadership, the Field Grade Years

Organizational Leadership from AR 6-22:

Organizational leaders exercise leadership through subordinate leaders responsible for leading the various organizations that make up the larger organization. Organizational leaders establish a climate that supports their subordinate leaders. Subordinate units and organizations do not depend on daily guidance from their higher-level leaders to be successful. Organizational leaders, particularly commanders, are responsible for communicating intent two echelons down and understanding intent two echelons up.

Organizational leaders operate within commanders' intent and communicate that intent to subordinates as a means of providing room for subordinate initiative and decreasing the number of decisions they must personally make to keep the organization operating effectively. Organizational leadership includes responsibility over multiple functions, such as leading and synchronizing combined arms operations.

Organizational leaders regularly and personally interact with their subordinates. They make time to verify that reports and briefings match their own perceptions of the organization's progress toward mission accomplishment. Organizational leaders use personal observation and visits by designated personnel to assess how well subordinates understand the commander's intent and to determine if they need to reinforce or reassess the organization's priorities.

Earning a promotion to Major and entering the ranks of the Field Grade officer is an important milestone in every officer's career. When wearing Captain bars, people don't know if you are a newly minted Captain with 48 months of service and just a few days removed from Lieutenant or a salty Captain with nearly a decade of experience! Although the cut for promotion to Major is not incredibly tough, the gold oak leaf signifies a leader whose put in some time (at least a decade), suffered a fair share of knocks and is most likely on their way to serving a full career in the military.

Important to note, with a few exceptions, Majors are usually not commanders. The rank is the epitome of the organizational leader, shaping systems, policy, processes and plans for increasingly larger organizations. The work of an "Iron Major" as they are often called, can leave profound positive (or negative) impacts on battalions, brigades and even some division size elements for years to come. Often referring to themselves as the head "rowers" (an analogy to the rowers on ancient Greek warships), Majors are the quintessential man / woman behind the curtain. Battalion executive officers, operations officers and Brigade staff officers truly ensure the organization runs smoothly as well as prepared for the next challenging mission. The commander and Soldiers out executing operations may deservedly get all the glory, but it's important we remember the young, 30-something Major who leads a small staff planning our nation's toughest missions.

And this is also exactly the reason some officers struggle in adjusting to the field grade ranks. For many leaders, it may be the first time they aren't barking orders and directly responsible for executing tasks. Something they don't tell you at your commissioning source, an officer spends the majority of a career as a staff or organizational leader rather than a commander. In my own career, I only wore the "green tabs" of a platoon leader, battery and battalion commander for just a little over four of my twenty four years as an officer!

The field grade years (and Major especially) are a very critical benchmark for future promotion and moving forward to higher levels of responsibility. Performance in Major, key developmental positions is the number one factor for selection to Lieutenant Colonel and battalion command which, as you may recall, is what many consider the first tough cut for Army officers. Some officers bristle at the fact a Major, who successfully masters the many soft skills required to perform as an exceptional organizational leader, is potentially set up for career advancement better than a Major, who as a junior officer may have valiantly led a small unit in combat, but struggled as a Field Grade battalion level operations officer. One faculty member at the Army Pre Command Course summarized it best- “what got you selected for battalion command, will not make you a great battalion commander”.

Is the emphasis the Army puts on being a great organizational leader and successful “Iron Major” the right approach? In my humble opinion, yes. Our nation needs young officers providing outstanding direct leadership of small units into literally life and death combat situations. More importantly, we need those same young direct leaders to develop into the absolute very best organizational leaders who can create the plans, policies, systems and processes to ensure the next generation of Soldiers are victorious on future battlefields. In my opinion this model is what sets the United States military apart from others in the world and ensures our long term security.

Of course, the Army doesn't always get it right. Promotions, selections and even the Professional Military Education system is not perfect and unfortunately the organizational and sometimes strategic leaders who make it through the process are not worthy to be in the presence of the fine young men and women they lead. But what has always provided me a measure of comfort is the mistakes are the exception rather than the rule. I can honestly count on one hand how many Majors or above I've encountered over a 24 year career that prompted me to wonder, “how did he / she get here”. Unfortunately, like many things in life, it's the failures that

often get the notoriety and sometimes give a bad reputation to a predominantly successful leader development process.

Bringing it back to a personal level, in 2005 after completing my second year as a USMA company Tac officer and a decade of service, I was very fortunate to be selected for promotion to Major and to serve as the Regimental Executive Officer (XO). While USMA Regimental XO duties and responsibilities are quite a bit different than a typical Army “line” unit XO, the major principles of organizational leadership remained. I had the daunting task of establishing processes, building consensus and enabling daily operations for eight Cadet Companies (roughly 1000 cadets) led by some of the best officers in the Army and on top of all that, they were my peers! One truth I learned while serving at USMA, peer leadership is definitely the most challenging.

Additionally, my boss was an exceptionally seasoned former Infantry battalion commander molded by tough combat experiences in Iraq. I learned an incredible amount from his leadership. While it was only a year, serving as a Regimental XO in the United States Corps of Cadets was my first attempt at organizational leadership and I believe truly helped me pick up the concepts at Intermediate Level Education (ILE) and during future Major key developmental assignments.

In the days of old, attendance at the Intermediate Level Education (ILE) course at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas was a centralized Army selection and considered one of the first cuts for an officer’s career. In 2007 the Army changed policy making ILE universal and 100% resident attendance at Fort Leavenworth. Majors of the time (myself included) called this the “no Major left behind” approach, a play on the educational policies of the Bush administration. The Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth is arguably the cornerstone of the Army’s Professional Military Education system and it was a real honor to be able to attend the 10 month long resident ILE course. While “no Major left behind” was a noble effort, some years later, the Army backed away from 100% resident ILE and went back to a selection process.

Making the experience more exciting, in 2007 we were the first ILE class to occupy the Lewis and Clark Center, an

enormous learning complex that featured a computer terminal at every student desk and state of the art audio / visual equipment. I am confident the Lewis and Clark rivaled any civilian institutions of the time! While the learning facilities were some of the most modern in the nation, we won't talk about the post housing on Fort Leavenworth at the time. Regardless, the 10 months at ILE and Fort Leavenworth are a welcome break for Army officers and their families who have been enduring pretty much non-stop action for a decade.

The program of instruction is in many ways similar to a civilian graduate school experience. In fact, the school is accredited and at the time, students had the option of completing one or two additional assignment (essentially a thesis) in order to earn a Master of Science in Strategic Studies. Regrettably, I passed on this opportunity, but fortunately I was able to earn a very similar degree later in my career. The first portion of the academic experience was common core for all students while the second half allowed students to choose electives and focus on skills that would help them succeed within their Army career field. Like other PME offerings, the school not only included Army Majors, but also sister service and foreign students as well. The courses I took during ILE below.

ILE Common Core

Foundations

Strategic Studies

Operational Studies

Army Operations

Force Management

Transformation in the Shadow of Global Conflict

Military Innovation in the Interwar Period

Roots of the Contemporary Operations

Leadership I

Leadership II

Combined Land Component Operations

Division Operations

BCT Operations

ILE Electives

Joint Theater Air and Missile Defense Operations
Air Missile Defense Workstation (AMDWS)
Logistics for Executive Officers
Joint Force Command
Advanced Joint Operations Planning
Adv Global Command & Control Systems
Language Self-Study
Joint Firepower Course

As you can see, the common core includes courses in leadership, strategy, force management, history, and operations while the elective courses I chose were more applicable for my particular branch within the Army. The common core classes are an officer's first exposure to such strategic concepts as ways, means, ends and centers of gravity. Officers are taught how to develop operational plans that fit into a larger strategy and to consider not only decisive operations but also shaping / supporting efforts. Furthermore, the courses in leadership and force management focus on the long view, how plans and policies implemented today may produce results in the future. All of the common courses are aimed at one thing- making exceptional organizational leaders who are prepared for their Major key developmental assignment.

The common core certainly sets a good foundation for a Major to serve as a leader on a battalion, brigade or even division staff. Upon graduation, Majors understand how to identify adversary centers of gravities and then develop an operational plan to attack. Additionally, ILE gives the young organizational leader a good exposure to command philosophy, something up until that point in their career, the officer most likely read but never had a direct hand in shaping. The Major is expected to understand their commander's philosophy and perhaps even help him / her craft it. More importantly, by understanding a commander's philosophy and guidance, the Major can translate what may be visionary statements into understandable and executable policies, programs, plans or systems. This is sometimes referred to as translating the "art" of military operations into the "science".

ILE offers a wide range of elective courses that are designed to prepare Army officers to excel in more specific assignments. Examining the electives I chose reveals some very Air Defense Artillery officer specific courses such as “Joint Theater Air and Missile Defense Operations” and “Air and Missile Defense Workstation (AMDWS)” as well as courses I thought might help me learn more about unfamiliar topics such as, “Logistics for Executive Officers”. You may notice “Language Self Study” as one of my electives, this course was completed entirely online via a popular language learning software tool. I chose to take Korean as I knew my assignment following ILE would require serving as an operations officer for an Air Defense battalion forward stationed in the Republic of Korea. These classes were very helpful in building the technical knowledge I would need to be successful in my future assignments.

I mentioned briefly in the introduction chapter about Joint Professional Military Education (JPME). ILE is one of the first opportunities for an officer to learn about Joint warfighting. ILE attendees may choose to take elective Joint courses such as “Advanced Joint Operations Planning” and “Joint Firepower Course” which satisfy JPME level I requirements. I chose to pursue both of these electives in order to meet the JPME level I. After a Major completes Army branch key developmental assignments as an XO or S3, a position on a joint staff, with a sister service, or an interagency partner to earn “joint credit” is a highly sought after broadening position. In order to stay competitive for promotion to the highest levels in the Army (think flag officer) JPME completion and joint assignments earning “joint credit” are imperatives. Ironically, some years later, my first joint assignment was my final assignment in the Army, but to be honest, I didn’t really pursue a joint billet very hard!

We have reviewed a little about the context and structure of the Army’s key organizational leadership developmental institution, Intermediate Level Education (ILE), now let’s dive into some academic writings from this phase! There is a common phrase jokingly spread amongst ILE students that goes something like “it’s only a lot of reading if you do it”.

Like most witticisms, there is a grain of truth. Students are assigned A LOT of material to read. This will range from Army doctrine which is about as boring as it gets, to CGSC produced text books on leadership and operations which often contain vignettes to illustrate a teaching point.

Additionally, instructors may introduce other texts or excerpts from think pieces that help guide their lesson plan. The staff and faculty are generally senior field grade officers or retired military who possess a wealth of knowledge on their assigned area of instruction as well as how to effectively deliver. To keep honest people honest, there are a number of writing assignments designed to make the student reflect on past experiences and apply what they (should) have read in the course texts. For this reason, the writing assignments are more numerous during ILE but shorter in length. As I reviewed my files from ILE I found over 20 different papers all 3-5 pages in length; that is over one hundred pages written in a 10 month period, mostly with me pontificating about “how to think”!

The assignments are not as research intensive as perhaps some other graduate school work, but some topics do require a fair measure of hitting the books in the very well-equipped library facilities. Important to also remember, in addition to the reading and writing, most of which is done outside the classroom, there are planning exercises during class where students serve in different roles on a Brigade staff and work their way through notional scenarios using the steps of the Army’s Military Decision Making Process to include producing a complete operations order.

Many ILE student’s may espouse the “it’s only a lot of reading if you do it” mantra, but beyond the bluster, it behooves the student to perform a reading “triage” on the assigned materials in order to determine which assignments are “priority” and which are “routine”. A lot of the in class work includes small group briefings or participating in discussions about the assigned materials. During class, it becomes evident very quickly who didn’t read the assignments and are not contributing to the group work. These Majors are often referred to as “anchors” by their peers within the small group setting and although they will most likely achieve course standards

and graduate, they are establishing a poor reputation for themselves with colleagues who in a few short months may be serving in an adjacent unit...perhaps on a distant battlefield!

I've selected six writing assignments from ILE that I believe offer a glimpse at where most standard "M1A1" Army officers reside in organizational leader development at the twelve years of service mark and as a junior Major. You'll notice the writing assignments are much more opinion, analysis or argumentative based than structured research. Most of the assignments required the student to reflect, analyze and then assert a position for a particular topic. Instructors graded the papers to ensure the student "got it" for the particular "how to think" concept. Although this is certainly a less quantitative grading approach than an academy professor assessing the merits of a research paper, the numerous writing assignments and instructor feedback was a very effective means to teach us how to think like an organizational leader.

Because the following six pieces are relatively short in length, I won't pause between each writing to provide context or analysis but will do so up front:

1. "Leadership Philosophy" was one of our first writing assignments for ILE during the L100, Leadership I common core course. While I recall the assignment was to develop a notional leadership philosophy for leading an organization, I took the approach of offering how my philosophy is developed. Interesting peek into the mind of a developing organizational leader, especially one portion where I reflect on a leadership challenge during my direct leader years. As I consider this piece now, I am not sure my philosophy on leadership has changed terribly much regardless of the many leadership experiences gained during the 13+ years since the paper was written!

2. The second offering, "Organizational Development Plan for the 56th HBCT" is also from L100 but attempts to go beyond philosophy and requires the student to actually develop a plan on how to influence a notional Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT). Organizational leadership at its finest! A scenario in the course materials provided background for the

students to analyze and develop plans to address challenges the organization is facing. Again this was early in the ILE curriculum and you can see the faculty are wasting no time in developing the students into organizational leaders.

3. The third selection is from L200 or Leadership II and is our “final exam” for the course. This was a testing method often used by the ILE faculty. Students were given thought provoking questions (sometimes several to choose from) and were required to develop short essays in response. For this particular exercise, “Battle Command” and “Develop Organizations” were my two topics to address. Note, these were take home exams as you may surmise by the doctrine and text references within the writing.

4. Remaining within the ILE common core curriculum but shifting gears from leadership (I know this chapter is organizational leader development, but we need to look at all aspects) is an assignment from C100 “Foundations of Strategy”. I enjoyed these courses as it was truly my first exposure to such concepts as “centers of gravity”, “ways, means, ends” and thinking about “diplomacy, information, military and economics (DIME)” when analyzing a complex problem. This particular assignment was meant to be an argumentative essay either for or against a popular think piece on global security. This was the first time I was challenged to think about such matters but it certainly wouldn’t be the last as you’ll see in our chapter on strategic leader development.

5. It may surprise some readers to learn there is a history curriculum within the ILE program of instruction. That being said, it is not a study of history in the classical sense but rather using historical events from the past to shape our thinking about current issues. 2007 marked a highpoint in the then four year long war in Iraq and six year war in Afghanistan. Some pundits and elected politicians were considering whether our nation’s military would ever need to address a near peer threat again or should just transform to be best prepared for addressing counterinsurgency threats (as we were seeing in Iraq and Afghanistan). Needless to say this question also permeated the minds of those who were currently serving in the military! The writing assignment in the following pages is

the take home exam from H300 “Roots of Contemporary Operations” and asks the student to address this tough question. Specifically the question, “What obstacles would military culture and political considerations pose to the US military if it attempted a major transformation oriented on fighting counterinsurgencies?” This was another very interesting assignment and very appropriate for the times. Reading this through a 2020 lens certainly offers a different perspective!

6. The last writing assignment for your consideration is from the electives portion of ILE. As you may recall, I selected courses that would fulfill JPME level I requirements. One such required class was A534 “Joint Forces Command” and really opened my eyes to a whole new side of military operations. Most of the course was spent learning about the different service and inter agency capabilities that could be leveraged during a joint operation. The course also focused on the sometimes complex C2 structures of such a joint organization. Our writing assignment from this course was to identify “The Characteristics of an Effective Joint Staff Officer”, truly an ambitious endeavor since most of us had never served on a Joint Staff. These papers were evaluated on the instructor’s assessment of whether the student “got it” and successfully learned how to think like a joint staff officer in this particular case. You will probably notice a lot of my recurring themes on leadership in this piece!

This a snapshot of six selected essays from over twenty produced in the short 10 months of Intermediate Level Education. Analyze the assignments not from the perspective of how effective a communicator the officer may be, but are they grasping what it means to be an organizational leader. Of course, I think the writings show that perfectly, but then again I am a little biased! Hope you enjoy this small peek into one of the Army’s most important Professional Military Education institutions and a significant benchmark in every military officer’s career.

Leadership Philosophy

Like many things in our profession, I believe we in the military tend to complicate our thoughts on leadership. Leadership comes in many different styles and levels of effectiveness- while it may be a proven fact that some styles are not as effective as others generally speaking there is not a perfect definition to leadership. Leaders are both born and made; we all will naturally reach our limits of leadership skill and ability. The one certainty is that each leader's style and philosophy is shaped by three distinct components. By continually reexamining our core principles of leadership, reflecting on our pivotal leadership experiences from the past, and developing a leader plan for the future each leader develops and refines their leadership philosophy.

While there are many important aspects of leadership there are three key principles that currently shape my leadership philosophy. Army Values were really nothing that hadn't already been inculcated in me (and I would guess most soldiers) by my parents from the time I was born, however the Army very wisely packaged these concepts and made it a cornerstone of the organization. A chief benefit of the Army Values is that there is a widely accepted and approved definition for each; however every soldier can still apply their own special meaning. This promotes diversity but retains a common moral and values based framework for the entire organization. I regard the Army as a profession in the same regards as a doctor or lawyer- the Army Values are our professional ethics and an excellent tool to lead and live by.

Another key principle of leadership for me is humility. Humility goes beyond being humble and not believing what is written about you in your evaluation reports. To me humility means taking the time to sit down and carry on a meaningful conversation with a 19 year old PFC from the exact opposite demographic from which you came just as easily as you could sit down and talk to a peer from the same demographic / unit / branch / commissioning source. It is our ability to put away our biases, prejudices, and preconceived notions about people and interact with them successfully. Leaders that can accomplish

this will instantly earn credibility and respect from their soldiers.

Lastly I believe personal presence is a key component of my leadership philosophy. Soldiers must know that you are always there; not necessarily beside them helping dig a foxhole (most probably would not want that) but that you are sharing their hardships of soldiering in your own way. Sometimes this does mean leading a road march from the front, scoring the best on an APFT, or completing an obstacle course but more often it boils down to ensuring soldiers know that you will always work hard for them. Personal presence must be thought out carefully as it runs the danger of being interpreted to mean staying at work 24/7- it is OK to let a soldier see you go home (hopefully they will follow your lead and retain balance in their life) just as long as they know that even at home you are dedicated to your profession and are continually keeping their welfare in the forefront of your mind.

As important as determining what core principles or beliefs will shape your leadership philosophy is also reflecting about key leadership challenges faced in the past and using those experiences to grow your philosophy. Like many of today's soldiers my leadership crucible came during the war in Iraq when for the first time in my military service I disobeyed a direct order from a superior officer. My battalion was responsible for securing the Baghdad International Airport which includes an area of operations about 2 miles around it in every direction. We had a rifle company of Infantry from the 10th Mountain to augment our Bradley Fighting Vehicles as dismounts. My sister battery had gotten the mission to conduct a raid on a suspected insurgent cache just outside of the airport perimeter in our AO and had rehearsed for it extensively; my battery was reconsolidating on that particular day and we had no involvement in the operation. However, at about 0500 on the morning of the raid my 1SG came to tell me that our Battalion S3 was taking one of our M113 APCs and its driver to be used in conducting the raid because one of the APCs planned for the mission had gone down for maintenance. Finding the S3 near the assembly area, I immediately told him he could have the vehicle but I was not letting that soldier who

knew nothing of the mission go on the raid. The argument turned into a shouting match and soon the Battalion commander noticed the commotion and came to the scene. Luckily my battalion commander understood that it was not right to jeopardize the safety of the dismounts in the back or anyone else on the mission by using a driver who had not rehearsed the raid- he told an NCO from the S3 shop who was familiar with the operation to drive the APC.

As I reflect on this incident I am proud of many things- that I stuck up for what I believed in, that my leadership supported me, and of course that I “won” the argument however I also regret much. I never spoke to the S3 again for the four weeks I remained in country. I’m sure our public argument did much to disenchant some of the soldiers who may have observed it. I did not handle this situation with the tact I should have or negotiate properly. Though I still stand by the reasons for my argument I have learned that the impassioned argument of a young Captain can have second or third order effects- even when they are right. I will use this small vignette to shape my interactions with everyone, both superior and subordinate as well as to try to teach other impassioned junior leaders to stick by their guns but do so with the right degree of tact and decorum.

After determining one’s core leadership beliefs and reflecting on the past a leader should think seriously about how he or she will lead at their next level. As I think about entering organizational leadership as a Battalion S3 or XO I do not plan on departing from my core beliefs- I will ensure Army values permeate all that I do, display humility, and ensure that every soldier knows I am always present for them. But to get into the nuts and bolts of how I can best influence my organization as a S3 or XO I foresee myself looking hard at the systems that make the battalion run. Systems can include both written procedure and people; this includes creating, reforming, and evaluating the systems as necessary to make the battalion function better to achieve the commander’s vision. I believe if done properly this will instill confidence at all levels of the organization that the battalion is a competent and professional organization that everyone is proud to be a part of. I am sure

there is more to being a field grade leader in a unit than this but as for right now I foresee this as where I can best shape my unit for the better.

Core beliefs, experience from the past, and a plan for the future are three key components of developing a leadership philosophy. This is not all encompassing and there are many components of leadership that I try to apply every day but did not mention here. However these three parts of a leader philosophy represent the baseline of what I will use to establish my own, they are not written in stone and subject to change; this is in itself another component of leadership- adaptability and flexibility. New philosophies on leadership will be published, successful leaders will come and go, but for the moment sticking to these three components is what I will use to guide my leadership philosophy.

Organizational Development Plan for the 56th HBCT

The organizational developmental needs of the 56th HBCT are not uncommon for a unit that is undergoing numerous significant changes- change from combat to reset, transform from a legacy brigade to a HBCT, and significant personnel turnover. We as the leader team of the BCT must identify and implement measures to address the developmental needs of the unit that are caused by these changes. Specifically the 56th HBCT requires organizational development in the following areas: 1) personnel fatigue and stress resulting from a long deployment 2) updated mission essential task list (METL) from a high intensity conflict (HIC) focus to one that accurately addresses the current operational environment (COE) 3) completing HBCT transformation tasks not only physically but *culturally* 4) individual counseling and leader development 5) adapting to the new red cycle model. We will address each of these needs over time however the top three organizational developmental needs of the 56th HBCT that the leader team will address in the next six months and that are essential to the BCT's continued success are completing our transformation culturally, updating our METL from HIC to the COE, and addressing the fatigue / stress of our soldiers returning from combat.

Most critical to the developmental needs of the 56th BCT is to not only complete our physical transformation from a legacy brigade to an HBCT but more importantly to change our culture. The 56th BCT has a proud history of being the best in FORSCOM at M1 tank and M2 Bradley gunnery. Additionally our warrior spirit has excelled time and again during numerous HIC rotations at the combat training centers. While this fighting culture has done us well in the past as we prepared to face an armored enemy on a linear battlefield, it produced only satisfactory results during our most recent deployment to Iraq; some have even said that the BCT was too "heavy handed" while conducting stability operations. Many of the NCOs and officers who served here some years ago and return to the BCT revive the "espoused values" and "artifacts" of an Armor

Brigade that's culture was truly suited to the complete destruction of the enemy on a linear battlefield.⁶⁹ While aspects of this culture are good (warrior ethos), the leader team must inculcate a new set of espoused values and artifacts that are in line with our COE and in line with the mission set of a transformed HBCT.

First we must address the artifacts that permeate the culture of a "HIC" armor brigade. This ranges from stopping the "shoot em' in the face" and "burning bodies" type cadences to taking a hard look at rite of passage events (i.e. earning spurs). Additionally this will include looking at company mottos and looking at the art work on our tanks, in our company areas, and elsewhere. We will not lose our warrior ethos but we must change from the mindset of "killing everyone in front of us that is not dressed like us" to one that understands the war we are confronted with now is as much about the lives we save as the enemy we kill. Hand in hand with looking at the artifacts of our organization will be adjusting our espoused values. Our Bradley / Tank commanders, platoon leaders, and commanders place a high value on gunnery; while they must know that table VIII gunnery proficiency is truly important, equally important is proficiency at stability operation tasks such as SWET patrols and interfacing with local populace. We must adjust our SGT's time, company FTX and BN training accordingly. Again these initiatives to address the needed developmental change of our culture will in no way diminish our HIC capability but the changes will set us up for success during our next deployment.

Directly related to changing what we value and our artifacts will be a much needed METL change. Currently our Brigade METL and corresponding METL crosswalk of collective and individual tasks contain only offense and defense related tasks. There are no METL tasks that directly relate to stability operations or our COE. This again is evidence of a resistance to change from a HIC focused armor brigade culture to our current state. We will appoint a tiger team comprised of senior NCOs and officers from throughout the Brigade to review the appropriate doctrine and determine a

⁶⁹ Schein, Edgar H., *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc.1992), 17-19.

proposed Brigade METL for the Division Commander's approval. Upon approval of our METL, we will develop a METL crosswalk down to individual tasks and issue it to each company within three months. We will completely revamp our training and evaluation systems so that this new METL becomes the focus of everything we do. Tied in with developing our new METL and training plan is ensuring our transformation tasks are complete and that all equipment is on hand / fully mission capable. This is an organizational developmental need that should have been addressed long ago but due to the high optempo the brigade has not been able to conduct a much needed METL review.

Optempo is also taking its toll on our soldiers. Soldiers and leaders must be allowed to decompress after a long deployment. Two weeks block leave after the deployment is not sufficient time to adjust from war to garrison and get reacquainted with family. While we must push forward with red cycle, individual training, and maintenance tasks during this reset period we must protect our soldier's time as much as possible. We will look hard at red cycle taskings and directed training that will keep soldiers away from home; we will mitigate what we can and alert the Division leader team about those directed tasks that just don't pass the common sense test. Additionally we will strictly enforce not only family time hours but also the prescribed duty day in the training schedule. The BCT leader team will conduct sensing sessions with our soldiers to determine which elements of the brigade are adhering to the training schedule and to the family time policy. Our soldiers and leaders are tired; retention for both soldiers and junior officers is becoming more challenging. We must do everything we can to give them the time they need during the reset phase to get refocused, motivated, and ready to train hard in preparation for their next mission.

As stated earlier we have more organizational developmental needs but changing the culture, adjusting our METL, and getting our redeployed soldiers the time they need are our top three concerns that we will address first in the next six months. In addition to addressing these organizational needs, we will refocus on individual leader development and

counseling of all soldiers to ensure that each member of the BCT gets their individual developmental needs met. While we have many developmental needs to address, once we've successfully adjusted our METL and our culture from that of a high intensity conflict focused armor brigade many pieces will begin to fall into place. In six months the 56th HBCT will be focused, ready to train and most importantly, ready for any mission.

I Battle Command

“From a leadership perspective, what are the greatest differences in the application of Battle Command in a COIN environment versus major combat operations?”

Battle command is the art and science of understanding, visualizing, describing, directing, leading, and assessing forces to impose the commander’s will on a hostile, thinking, and adaptive enemy. Battle command applies leadership to translate decisions into actions—by synchronizing forces and warfighting functions in time, space, and purpose—to accomplish missions. (FM 3-0, PG 5-2)

It is easy for a military leader to jump to the conclusion that battle command in a counterinsurgency (COIN) environment is considerably more difficult than in a high intensity conflict (HIC). While understandable this assessment is flawed- the successful application of the elements of battle command is hard regardless of the type of conflict. However there is one key difference in the application of battle command in COIN operations versus battle command in a high intensity conflict. In COIN unlike HIC the application of battle command must be almost entirely focused on the operational environment within which the military formation is operating rather than the organization and capabilities of the unit itself; to understand this one needs only look at the differences of how a commander visualizes and directs on the COIN battlefield as well as how the leader exhibits the corresponding leader competencies of lead and achieve.

For years the Army visualized and analyzed combat operations through the lens of five (later six) simple words- METT-TC: mission, enemy, terrain / weather, troops / support available, time available, and civil considerations (FM 3-0, pg. 5-5). Two of these six elements are inwardly focused (mission and troops / support available) while the other four are meant to help analyze the enemy and environment. From the most junior Lieutenant to the Corps commander this tool was integral to a leader’s ability to visualize and analyze the battlefield. While this lens still applies, the differences of how

each of these words is defined changed significantly. FM 3-24 the Army's counterinsurgency manual attempts to contrast how METT-TC differs from a HIC battlefield to a COIN environment (FM 3-24, pg. 8-2).

However on today's COIN battlefields many commanders are drifting away from METT-TC as the cornerstone for visualizing the battlefield and rely more heavily on two relatively new tools to assist in analyzing the COIN fight: PMESII-PT (political, military, economic, social, information, infrastructure, physical environment, time) and ASCOPE (Areas, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People, Events), (FM 3-0, pgs. 5-3, 5-7). Not only is this a lot more words to remember, these tools are completely focused on the operational environment and contain no elements meant to analyze a unit's own situation. Herein lies the most significant difference (and potential danger) of how the visualize aspect of battle command differs from COIN to HIC- a commander in a COIN environment can more easily become too focused on their operational environment and could potentially overlook a critical aspects of their own unit.

Based upon how the commander visualizes either the COIN or HIC battlefield they will then execute the "direct" function of battle command. Here again we find stark differences from the COIN to the HIC environment. While risk is inherent in any military operation, due to the nature of COIN operations commanders may become risk averse. While visualizing and directing in the HIC fight a commander knows that his or her action means that not only their own soldier's lives are at risk but also a whole lot of enemy forces will likely die.

On today's COIN battlefield the dynamic has changed significantly; not only do commanders feel the need to mitigate risk to their own soldiers due to the asymmetric nature of the COIN battlefield, but they must also be inherently more cautious when directing a course of action because of the effects it will have on the enemy. FM 3-24 states on page 1-27:

"Counterinsurgencies often achieve the most meaningful success in garnering public support and legitimacy for the HN

government with activities that do not involve killing insurgents... Arguably, the decisive battle is for the people's minds."

This statement in its very nature makes commanders more cautious when directing during COIN operations as they must now consider limiting deadly effects on the enemy. Even though executing the direct element of battle command is just as difficult on the HIC battlefield directing in COIN operations differs so significantly from past schools of thought that it has the potential to influence the entire battle command process.

Tying together not only direct and visualize but all elements of battle command is leadership. Within the core leader competencies there are two elements that are directly influenced by how the commander visualizes and directs in either the HIC or COIN battlefield- lead and achieve. A commander must lead differently in the COIN environment than in the HIC fight. While in either situation a leader is expected to "motivate, inspire, and influence others to take initiative, work towards a common purpose, accomplish critical tasks, and achieve organizational objectives (FM 6-22, pg. A-2)" in a COIN environment unlike HIC a commander may find himself indirectly leading the local indigenous population as much as or more than his own unit.

Similarly the leader competency of achieve differs greatly from COIN to HIC environments based on the way a leader visualizes and directs. Achieving or "accomplishing organizational results" (FM 6-22, pg. A-9) is relatively easy to measure in the HIC fight- if the commander has taken the objective and accomplished the mission they have achieved the desired result. However in the COIN fight this leader competency can no longer be measured so quantitatively. In the COIN environment objectives / missions are not as always well defined as on the HIC battlefield and the measure of effectiveness for what a leader achieves in the COIN environment may not even be visible for many years.

Both the lead and achieve leader competencies are applicable in either the HIC or COIN environment but their applications differ greatly based on the differences of how the

leader visualizes and directs; we can see this more clearly by comparing a historical HIC example with today's COIN fight in Iraq. GEN MacArthur visualized the strategic setting in Korea, November 1950 as one of imminent victory. Based on his analyzing the situation he directed a decisive action (amphibious invasion of North Korea) meant to complete the defeat of the North Koreans and end the war. Although unsuccessful and as history proved the assumptions he made about the enemy and his own troops available were wrong, we see in this example of battle command in a HIC environment a leader who visualized and directed decisive action to lead his forces to victory. This model of leadership in combat operations permeated Army thinking for the bulk of the 20th century.

Flash forward to Iraq, June 2004; faced with a growing insurgency, unstable host nation government, and wavering support at home GEN George Casey took command of Multinational Forces Iraq and sought to direct a path to victory. Unlike MacArthur, based on his visualization of the situation in Iraq GEN Casey sought to indirectly lead the indigenous population of Iraq to achieve their own results rather than through the sole direct action of American forces. Based on his visualization of the COIN battlefield, GEN Casey directed the formation of large forward operating bases where US forces were meant to become more of an aspect of the operational environment (ASCOPE) rather than the decisive operation. This was meant to both empower the Iraqi government and appease our own government at home. Likewise he increased the number of training teams to further empower Iraqi Army and attempt to achieve the goal of turning over the COIN fight to the Iraqis. Here at the strategic level of operations we see two theater commanders who applied the same elements of battle command and correlating leader competencies in very different ways based on the core differences between high intensity conflict and counterinsurgency operations.

Commander's apply the visualize and direct elements of battle command as well as the correlating leader competencies of lead and achieve differently in the COIN environment from the HIC battlefield because in COIN operations the

commander becomes more focused on his / her operational environment rather than own unit capabilities. Again while it may seem that battle command in the COIN fight is harder it is not. While it differs greatly and in some ways is more complex than HIC battle command it can never be forgotten that the price of failure in COIN battle command will mean only a more protracted conflict, while the price of battle command failure in a HIC fight almost always means the loss of many American lives.

II. Develop Organizations

“When commanding a unit in combat, how do you assess the development of the organization beyond simply accomplishing the mission?”

Commanders typically develop their organizations engaged in combat using lessons they have learned through leadership successes or failures during past operations. Additionally commanders consider their continual reassessment of their unit’s proficiency at its ability to accomplish the mission and METL tasks. But a commander or organizational leader most significantly impacts the development of a unit in combat long before they reach the combat zone. Many would say once a unit is in contact that it is much too late. Organizational leaders develop their units for combat by creating a positive environment, preparing their self, and developing their subordinates while training in garrison long before they reach the combat area.

Creating a positive environment means more than just creating organizational day sports teams, offering incentive passes for excellent performance, and executing sensing sessions. It also means making soldiers proud and confident of the hard work they have accomplished. This starts with soldiers taking pride in enduring common hardships encountered during tough realistic training. It also means that when a subordinate unit or even individual soldier does fail either in training or personally while in garrison the event is reviewed, openly discussed, and then the unit or soldier is given a fair opportunity to remediate the deficiencies. This will set a

positive environment for success and confidence. To assess the measures of performance on this priority one only has to look at the training that subordinate units are conducting. Is the training tough and warrior focused? More importantly does it offer time for unit level AARs and retraining so that the unit and soldiers can develop a proficiency at the task. The effectiveness of this priority can be easily measured- soldiers will be confident not only in their own skills because they have trained to standard but also in their leadership who takes the time to establish an environment where everyone learns and recovers from mistakes.

Organizational leaders prepare themselves simply by living Army Values all the time even when no one is looking. The Army Values in their entirety boil down to just a few key leadership principles- lead from the front, lead by example and put soldier's welfare before your own. It starts by preparing oneself mentally and physically for the rigors of combat. It also includes organizational leaders always executing the most common of tasks including leading unit runs, being the first qualified on a weapons system, last in the chow line, or being the first during tough training. It also means setting positive examples- work like hell during the day but go home to your family at final formation; be involved in the community. Performance measures for this priority are again easily identified- subordinate leaders will mimic what they have seen their organization leaders execute- leading their units on runs, last in the chow line, and first during all qualifications. The effectiveness of this priority will be the payback 10 fold in combat as junior soldiers must step up and take lead, again mimicking the positive examples they have seen trickle down all the way from the top.

Developing subordinates describes not only the counseling, coaching, and mentoring that must be present in any unit but more accurately the building of a team from the individual on up. Starting with individual development (through counseling, OPD / NCOADPs, etc.), then progressing to team level development opportunities (gunnery, battle drills), and then on to more collective developmental training opportunities an organizational leader can never forget that a

team begins with the individual. Again the measure of performance on this leadership priority will be easily identifiable as each unit progresses through a sequential development culminating with successful gunnery qualification or “T” ratings on METL tasks. Measure of effectiveness in combat is not only completing the mission but doing it with the minimum loss of life and equipment.

To illustrate how an organizational leader successfully develops a unit for combat while in garrison one only needs to compare the two Infantry battalions that were locked in a fight for their lives against the North Vietnamese Army in the Ia Drang Valley, 1965. LTC Hal Moore seized the opportunity at home station to complete the development of 1-7 CAV and he epitomized the successful application of the “develop” leader competency. He fostered a positive environment and built esprit de corps by executing tough training, AAR, and retraining until the unit was confident in their skills. He developed himself by ensuring he was the first on the battlefield and last to leave. Lastly he was able to develop subordinates and form a team by taking such a specialized skill as helicopter pilot and incorporating that highly specialized skill into a well-functioning team. As a result his Battalion although suffering severe losses was able to inflict serious casualties on the enemy and most importantly hold their ground until evacuation could occur.

LTC Moore’s counterpart LTC McDade commander of the 2-7 CAV battalion was the antithesis of the “develop” leader competency though not entirely due to his own fault. Unfortunately LTC McDade was never given the opportunity to develop at home station and was thrown into battalion command while in combat whereas suggested earlier it is far too late to begin the development of a unit. LTC McDade was unable to foster a cohesive and positive environment, develop himself, or build a team starting with the individual. Instead he led a battalion who had no directed development into a tough situation similar to Moore’s, but with comparatively disastrous results.

Long before they reach the battlefield, organizational leaders must develop their unit by creating a positive

environment, developing their self, and developing subordinates. This does not mean development ends when a unit deploys. As stated earlier once in combat an organizational leader must continually reassess the units development and try to institute developmental programs as best as possible given the conditions. But as we saw in the Ia Drang valley 1965, leaders cannot reasonably expect to be successful if they begin developing a unit that is already in contact.

Barnett's Theory on Global Security: An Invalid and Unfeasible Solution

Thomas Barnett's theory on the international security environment states that there are "core" nations who have embraced globalization and there are the "gap" countries that have not. The "gap" countries are breeding grounds for unstable states, terrorists, and pandemic that will directly affect the security of "core" nations as exemplified by the events of 9/11. Very few could argue that the basis of this theory is correct-disparity in economic status and technology generally leads to conflict, however Barnett's solutions to "close the gap" between "core" and "gap" contain several shortcomings. Barnett is obviously a trusted and respected academician; however in the last nearly five years since presenting his theory there is evidence in Iraq and elsewhere that many of the assumptions in his theory just aren't valid. Thomas Barnett's theory for the international security environment offers an acceptable basic premise but his solutions cannot be successfully implemented because they oversimplify a complex problem, make gross assumptions about "gap" countries, and take a cavalier approach to the commitment of military power.

It would be a safe assumption that "gap" nations would desire many of the positive aspects of being globalized; to assume that globalization is the one key component for safety and security throughout the world is oversimplifying an extremely complex problem. The problem of global security cannot be solved through globalization alone; aspects of culture, religion, education, healthcare, and geography must be considered with equal importance when developing a theory to solve global security. Barnett suggests that "what is most wrong about the Middle East is the lack of personal freedom and that translates into dead-end lives for most of the population"⁷⁰ without offering any detailed explanation on

⁷⁰ Barnett, Thomas P.M., "The Pentagon's New Map; It Explains Why We're Going to War and Why We'll Keep Going to War," U.S. Naval War College (March 2003); Reprinted in US Army Command and General Staff College, *C100 Reading Book and Advance Sheets* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: USAGSC, August 2007), 127.

how to give the people of the Middle East “personal freedom” short of regime change. Common sense dictates that it is completely unfeasible that “core” nations could give the people of the Middle East “personal freedom” simply by military action resulting in regime change or billions in economic aid. Fixing the problem of “dead-end lives” for the people of the Middle East must be analyzed through the lens of culture, religion and other aspects of their society before any plans for globalization could even be considered.

Closely related to Mr. Barnett’s oversimplification of a complex problem is his gross assumption that “gap” countries will be completely receptive to globalization. Barnett suggests “show me where globalization is thick with network connectivity, financial transactions, liberal media flows, and collective security, and I will show you regions featuring stable governments, rising standards of living, and more deaths by suicide than murder.”⁷¹ While this may be a partially true statement, will predominantly Islamic countries ever completely embrace “financial transactions” with Christian and Jewish societies or allow their people “liberal media?” His theory makes a very big assumption that “gap” countries need, want and will accept “core” help to globalize- a noble and lofty goal but one that is certainly unattainable in the foreseeable future.

Lastly and encompassing some of the aforementioned problems of Barnett’s theory, is his implication that “core” nations must have a sustained, large, and presumably unending military commitment inside “gap” countries providing security in order to set the conditions for globalization. He explains “show me a part of the world that is secure in its peace and I will show you strong or growing ties between local militaries and the U.S. military.”⁷² His theory makes two gross

⁷¹ Barnett, Thomas P.M., “The Pentagon’s New Map; It Explains Why We’re Going to War and Why We’ll Keep Going to War,” U.S. Naval War College (March 2003); Reprinted in US Army Command and General Staff College, *C100 Reading Book and Advance Sheets* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: USAGSC, August 2007), 123.

⁷² Barnett, Thomas P.M., “The Pentagon’s New Map; It Explains Why We’re Going to War and Why We’ll Keep Going to War,” U.S. Naval War

assumptions; first that the populations of “gap” countries would appreciate foreign soldiers on their soil securing them and second that the populations of “core” countries would be willing to send their militaries abroad on continuous and open ended commitments. Barnett does not address in detail the challenges of these history proven issues and therefore loses much of the credibility of his argument.

Nearly five years after publishing his theory and after agreeably mixed results from the real world application of his theory in Iraq it is clear that Barnett’s concept of globalization for global security needs serious refinement. While the very core of his theory, bridging the gap between haves and have not’s, remains a widely accepted truth we can only hope that Barnett is heeding the lessons learned so far from Western involvement in the Middle East- that it is a considerably more complex issue than he describes in his theory. If he truly wants to sell the need for globalization as a national policy, he should revise his theory to ensure that it doesn’t oversimplify complex issues, assume away the wish of the local populace, and that it is not based upon the presumption of an open ended military commitment in every “gap” nation.

Obstacles to Transforming to a COIN Focused Force

American military and political leaders face many of the same questions today as those during the interwar period between the end of WWI and the beginning of WWII. Some of these questions include: Who or what is the threat? What size force and technology do we need to counter that threat? What do the American people need and want? Given our current conflict in the Global War on Terror (GWOT) many have suggested that the military transform to a counter insurgency (COIN) specific or constabulary type force structure. Yet despite our nation's prosecution of the GWOT for the past seven years against a determined insurgent foe it is highly unlikely this conflict will cause America's military to transform to a COIN oriented force. The reasons our military would not take on such a drastic transformation are similar to the factors which shaped military transformation during the interwar period. United States military will not undertake a major shift to a COIN focused force because now as during the interwar period our military culture retains the root principle of seeking to annihilate the enemy, our political leaders as well as our public are averse to deploying American forces for long periods as would be necessary in COIN operations, and our Constitution implies the existence of a standing Army that can counter a full spectrum of threats, not just a specific enemy.

Today as in the 1920s the US military seeks to annihilate their enemy. This Clausewitzian concept is as ingrained in the culture of today's military as much as any other custom. During the interwar period like today Army leadership sought new weapon systems, formations, and equipment that will kill more efficiently. Eager to avoid the horrors of attrition warfare experienced during WWI, military planners during the interwar period developed new technologies and formations that grew the concept of mobile warfare. The interwar period saw tremendous technological developments both here and in Europe of tanks, machine guns, artillery, as well as in the doctrine to employ these systems and the logistics base to keep

them running⁷³. Similarly, today's Army seeks to field its Future Combat Systems (FCS) within the next 10 years that will enable soldiers to destroy enemy forces precisely without facing the enemy directly. Military innovations during both the interwar period and today are focused on maneuver warfare that centers on destroying the enemy; this concept runs counter to the core principles of conducting counterinsurgency operations.

The US Army's manual for fighting counterinsurgencies, FM 3-24 offers several "paradoxes of the counterinsurgency" which attempt to explain this contradiction to the destruction minded soldier. One of these "paradoxes" states: "Counterinsurgencies often achieve the most meaningful success in garnering public support and legitimacy for the HN government with activities that do not involve killing insurgents... Arguably, the decisive battle is for the people's minds."⁷⁴ It is very unlikely today's Army will be able to significantly change its annihilation focused culture any time soon thereby making a COIN specific force transformation very doubtful.

As much as our nation's military exhibits a culture of desiring to destroy the enemy, our society as a whole thrives in a culture that will always be averse to putting American soldiers in harm's way for extended periods as is necessary in COIN operations. FM 3-24 clearly states, "Insurgencies are protracted by nature. Thus, COIN operations always demand considerable expenditures of time and resources."⁷⁵ Like the military's unwillingness to depart from its culture of annihilation warfare, the American people have long shown a very vocal distaste for committing soldiers and resources to "protracted" military endeavors; most recently the 25 year long COIN fight in Vietnam and the ongoing COIN operation in Iraq.

⁷³ Millet, Allan R., "Patterns of Military Innovation." In *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, ed. Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millet (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 342-345.

⁷⁴ US, Department of the Army, FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, December 2006), 1-27.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 1-24.

Military and political leaders have generally sought to seek military transformation ideas that appease the people's sentiment and that will shorten the amount of time US forces are committed abroad. The most significant interwar period transformation concept came with the development of strategic bombing. This concept was revered by many since it promised to shorten the length of America's future wars considerably by destroying enemy personnel and equipment before they ever left the factory or their home⁷⁶. Even in today's current operational environment our nation spends the bulk of its defense budget on submarines, fighter air craft and other strategic type weapons designed to bring an expeditious end to our nation's conflicts. Transforming to a COIN focused force would only serve to perpetuate resentment by the populace of our political leaders who would commit the military element of national power to fight in a protracted COIN operation.

Lastly, our military will not transform to a COIN based force simply because our constitution implies that our nation's military must be ready to counter a full spectrum of threats. The preamble of the constitution states that the Union must "provide for the common defence." Later when granting the powers of the Congress regarding the militia the constitution states, "To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and *repel Invasions* (emphasis added)."⁷⁷ While it could be argued that our constitution does not forbid the military from transforming to a COIN based fighting force, few would disagree that our forefathers wrote these lines with the understanding that the US military will always be prepared for our "common defense" and to "repel invasions," tasks which do not fall neatly within the realm of counterinsurgency operations. Transforming the military to a COIN centric force would spark a legal and political debate that would only serve to weaken the nation and weaken the defense that our constitution guarantees.

⁷⁶ Millet, Allan R., "Patterns of Military Innovation." In *Military Innovation in the Interwar Period*, ed. Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millet (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 331.

⁷⁷ Mount, Steve. "Constitutional Topic: Martial Law." *USConstitution.net*. (30 Nov 2001). Online at <http://www.usconstitution.net/> accessed on (01 March 2008).

The US military will not transform to a COIN centric force because it is counter to the military's longstanding culture of annihilating its enemies, it counters the American society's aversion to protracted conflicts, and lastly our constitution does not allow for a specific mission tailored force. Despite the evidence against having a COIN only force, one cannot ignore the seven year war we are currently engaged in against a determined insurgent foe that presumably will not be defeated any time soon. Military leaders must be realists and make COIN related transformations within our current force structure. Many would argue that this has already begun with the creation of the very COIN capable Brigade Combat Team formations and a tremendous increase in the size of the Military Police Corps. But where will military and political leadership stop in transforming to a COIN capable force? Will they establish a sizeable constabulary force in addition to a standing high intensity conflict capable Army? The future holds the answer to these questions but one thing remains relatively certain, the US military will not lose its ability to conduct COIN operations as well as operations that encompass the full spectrum of armed conflict.

The Characteristics of an Effective Joint Staff Officer

In name the characteristics that are measures of effectiveness for a joint staff officer are identical to the ones that make a successful operational military leader. But in name only is where the commonality ends. Every characteristic of the military leader on the joint staff versus the operational military leader varies significantly in both definition and most importantly application. Many would argue that the basic tenets of leadership hold true regardless of an officer's assignment to a joint staff, training unit, or a forward deployed tactical unit; while this holds true for most aspects of leadership, the less solidly defined characteristics that make an officer effective at job performance vary greatly. To illustrate this point one can analyze three characteristics of an effective joint staff officer that in name are identical to the characteristics of an effective operational leader but vary significantly in both definition and application. It is my conclusion that both a joint staff officer as well as an operational leader must communicate exceptionally, show humility, and display impeccable integrity, however the application of these characteristics varies greatly.

How many Brigade commanders have we seen who can't even write an evaluation report without numerous spelling and grammar errors much less write a memorandum unless they have significant help from a skilled S1 or other staff member? However the same Brigade commander can speak in front of 3,000 men and compel them to run through a brick wall if necessary. While it's true these types of leaders are becoming less common, the exceptional verbal but poor written communicator with low technology skills still exists in small quantities across the force. This same O6 would struggle immensely on a joint staff because a joint staff officer must be able to communicate using written products in the prescribed format, with the correct content and in a timely manner⁷⁸. Verbal communication is still important- joint staff members must communicate coherent thoughts quickly, clearly, and concisely to their boss but the majority of joint staff work is

⁷⁸ As stated in LTC Coville's video presentation viewed in class on 10 & 14 APR 2008.

done through information papers, slide briefings, and standard message formats. An officer who through their career has neglected to become adept at using proper grammar, spelling, “slideology,” format, and even typing or basic computer skills will not be successful on the joint staff. Here we see that while communications is important to the operational leader it takes on a whole new meaning and application on a joint staff.

Like communication, humility has different meanings to the operational leader and the joint staff member. To the operational leader humility means such things as taking the time to listen to the lowest ranking of soldiers, being the last in the chow line, and always giving credit to their subordinates. But for joint staff members humility more accurately applies to subordinate style- humility for the joint staff officer could better be defined as deference to one’s boss. This doesn’t mean that the joint staff officer becomes a “yes” man who defers to the boss every time but more accurately it means that the joint staff officer must pick their battles carefully to only those situations “which we have special knowledge to bring to the table or when we believe that the boss’s decision may be impossible to implement.⁷⁹” This is in stark contrast to the tactical or operational level leader who defers much less to his / her boss and often times challenges their boss’ decision for the good of the unit they are leading.

Joint staff officers and operational leaders must display unquestionable integrity- this is expected to be a trait of all officers and is an Army value. Yet how many successful leaders at the tactical and operational level have we seen turn a blind eye to subordinates who “acquired” needed parts or who they themselves rounded up numbers when developing Unit Status Reports to be submitted to higher? The joint staff officer cannot waver in the slightest in their honesty and integrity when explaining even the smallest detail to their boss. As management consultant Robert A. Luke Jr. suggests:

⁷⁹ Gene Boccialetti, “Manage Yourself to Manage Your Boss,” from *Supervisory Management 5* (November 1995); Reprinted in *US Army Command and General Staff College, A534 Book of Readings* (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, March 2008), L1-5-1.

Few things are more harmful to a boss than a staffer whose word can't be trusted. This doesn't have to be blatant dishonesty- it could be overly optimistic promises on meeting deadlines, for example.⁸⁰

While it may seem insignificant, conveniently rounding numbers on a chart by a well-meaning staff member may paint an incorrect picture for the joint force commander, therefore causing him / her to make an incorrect conclusion or decision- a decision that could cost soldiers' lives. At the joint staff level more so than the tactical level, integrity in the smallest detail is supremely critical to effective performance and mission accomplishment.

In my opinion joint staff officers and operational leaders must communicate well, show humility, and display exceptional integrity; however each of these characteristics is applied differently based on the job the officer is performing. Most military leaders hold loyalties in two directions- to their commander and to the subordinates in the units that they are leading. This marks the key difference between an operational leader and joint staff officer; while a joint staffer's work may impact lower levels of organizations, their loyalty is almost exclusively directed at serving the needs and wants of their boss. For this reason the characteristics that make a successful joint staff officer although similar to an effective operational leader, are more aptly defined as characteristics of subordinate style rather than leadership qualities.

⁸⁰ Robert A. Luke Jr., "How to Manage Your Boss", from Supervisory Management 5 (February 1993); Reprinted in US Army Command and General Staff College, A534 Book of Readings (Fort Leavenworth: USACGSC, March 2008), L6-5-1.

CHAPTER 4

Strategic Leadership, the Executive Leader

Strategic leadership from AR 6-22:

Strategic leaders include military and civilian leaders at the major command through DOD levels. Strategic leadership guides and integrates multiple organizational level units that perform a wide range of functions. It influences several thousand to hundreds of thousands of people. These leaders allocate resources, communicate strategic vision, and prepare their commands and the Army itself for future missions. Strategic leaders shape Army culture by ensuring their directives, policies, programs, and systems are ethical, effective, and efficient.

Strategic leaders apply all core leader competencies they acquired as direct and organizational leaders, while further adapting them to the complex realities of their strategic conditions. Strategic leader decisions must consider congressional hearings, Army budgetary constraints, new systems acquisition, civilian programs, research, development, and inter-service cooperation. Every strategic leader decision has the potential of affecting the entire Army.

Strategic leaders are important catalysts for change and transformation. Because they follow a long-term approach to planning, preparing, executing, and assessing, they often do not see their ideas come to fruition during their tenure. Army modernization is an example where long-range strategic planning is necessary. Relying on many subordinate leader teams, the Army depends on organizational leaders to endorse the long-term strategic vision and ensure it reaches all of the Army. Because they exert influence primarily through their senior staffs and subordinates, strategic leaders must have

excellent judgment when selecting and developing subordinates for critical duty positions.

The field grade years are arguably the most demanding in one's career and my field grade experience certainly observed this notion. In 2008, shortly after graduation from ILE, my family and I reported to Ft. Hood, Texas where I was to serve in my first field grade key developmental position as a battalion operations officer. Within three months, our battalion deployed to South Korea for a one year tour to defend the southern half of the peninsula from North Korean missile attack. This was my first operational experience in a Patriot Air Defense battalion and as an organizational leader. That first year was rough but thanks to great leaders, peers, subordinates and yes some outstanding Army military education, I made it through.

After redeploying, I transitioned to my second field grade key developmental job to serve a brief six month stint as the executive officer or second in command of the battalion while we "re-set" the unit at Fort Hood. This was an outstanding opportunity to learn more about logistics, maintenance, personnel and other key organizational systems. While I enjoyed the experience, my heart has always been in operations!

In 2010 I was honored to be assigned as the forward Brigade operations officer (my third KD job) for a one year deployment to the Middle East or as we called it, the US Central Command Area of Responsibility. I would be responsible for planning the operations for nearly 3000 Soldiers deployed across four different countries in support of the Air Defense of the Arabian Gulf mission. Our Brigade's mission was to defend critical US and partner assets in the region from potential missile attack. Adding to the complexity of this job was the fact our Brigade was under the tactical control of the USAF as well as fully integrated with the Navy Ballistic Missile Defense ships in theater. This not only organizational leadership at its best, but also my first taste of joint operations although my position was not considered a

joint billet.

Important to remember, less than a decade earlier, I was assuming command of a 100 soldier Air Defense battery. I share this to illustrate the steep learning curve for military leaders in transitioning from direct to organizational leadership. If you count my commissioning source, I had about 10 years training and experience prior to assuming responsibility for a battery sized element, which many would argue is the pinnacle of direct leadership. Now, just seven years following the conclusion of my battery command, I was an organizational leader responsible for planning operations and training for a Brigade sized unit on a mission of strategic importance in a combat zone!

It was during this deployment I learned of my selection for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and tactical battalion command. A humbling moment and certainly will always be viewed as the personal “high water mark” for my military journey. As we reviewed in an earlier chapter, due to the rigor the Army (and other services) place on selection for “O5” level command, selection is viewed by many military officers as the quintessential successful career. More importantly, O5 level command is the perfect confluence of direct and organizational leadership that strongly appeals to the innermost of reasons we choose to serve.

Some have accurately described battalion command as “the last time Soldiers will know you by your voice in the dark.” Battalion command is the optimal mix of the intimacy encountered between comrades in arms during direct leadership and the operational art required of the organizational leader to develop policies, systems, plans and process to move a large organization towards a common goal.

When I redeployed from the Middle East in 2011, I selfishly hoped to “mark time” for a year until I assumed command during the summer of 2012. No such doing! I was assigned as the Brigade Deputy Commanding Officer (DCO) back at Fort Hood responsible for developing and maintaining the Brigade’s organizational systems. I was however afforded the opportunity to complete a short but interesting professional military education course.

The Battalion and Brigade Pre Command Course is three weeks long and held at the Combined Arms Center in Fort Leavenworth. There were a series of speakers from the very highest levels of Army leadership, when the agenda said “Army G1” (personnel), the speaker really was the General in charge of Army personnel! Likewise with briefings from the Chief of Staff and Sergeant Major of the Army. It was awesome to hear the insights of the most senior leaders on battalion command and indicated to the students yet again how much importance the Army puts on this level of leadership. The classroom instructors were all retired or active Colonels with command experience.

Brigade Deputy Commanding Officer was my fourth field grade key developmental position over four straight years (two deployed) and certainly the most challenging. While it was fairly common for officers to serve in numerous field grade KD billets when I came up through the leader development model, the Army is now trying to get away from this practice for a number of reasons. First and foremost, I occupied KD positions that other up and coming officers could have served in to gain their required 18-24 months of required field grade KD time. I know my leadership did not place me in these positions purposely to the detriment of others, rather in most cases, they didn’t have another choice. This was a misstep of the Army officer assignment process rather than poor officer personnel management at the Brigade level.

Second, while I would argue I was prepared as well as I could ever be to serve as a battalion commander, when considering the long view, I was not a very well rounded officer. In my 17 years of service up to the point I assumed command of a battalion, I had never served higher than Brigade level and my experience was completely at the operational level or below. While I developed mastery in battalion and brigade level operations, my exposure to executive leadership was very lacking; we’ll expound on this more later in the chapter as we dive into the executive level professional military education experience.

To be clear, I have zero regrets on how my field grade assignments played out and to be honest I wouldn’t have

wanted my career to unfold any other way. I loved serving as an organizational leader for four years in brigade and battalion level units. I was very well prepared for the challenge that is battalion command. While a two year joint or Army staff assignment thrown into the mix may have “broadened” and perhaps better equipped me to serve later at the executive levels, deep down, I am glad my career path led me where it did.

Of course, everything I’ve just shared in the past couple of paragraphs comes with the clarity of hindsight; in the summer of 2012 I was only focused on one thing, leading my battalion as best as I possibly could! It was a great honor to command a Patriot Air Defense battalion forward stationed in the Republic of Korea from 2012 to 2014. Our mission was to defend the northern part of the South Korean peninsula (to include Seoul) from North Korean ballistic missile attack. I was directly responsible for over 600 Soldiers to include many of their families stationed with them as well as over 300 pieces of Army equipment valued in the billions. I was blessed to serve with the most amazing field grade, company grade and warrant officers. Additionally, my lifelong respect of our military’s pride and back bone, the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps, only grew during battalion command. Most remarkable were our Soldiers, the best in the world, who although far from home, many for the first time, never ceased to produce the most amazing results.

It is hard to describe the two years of perpetual motion, intensity and speed with which battalion command passes. Like many things in the Army, about the time I hit my stride it was time for me to go. The high water mark of my career was over! About half way through command, I competed for the military’s strategic level professional military education, Senior Service College (SSC). Each service handles it a little bit different, but for the most part, SSC is viewed as the culminating military education opportunity and selection is an indicator for who will be promoted to O6. In fact, for the Army, selection to SSC is traditionally a harder cut than promotion to Colonel!

Selectees are required to submit preferences for which SSC

experience they desire to attend. Each service has a SSC, referred to as their “war college” but there are also a number of additional opportunities for meeting the SSC professional military education requirement to include the National War College as well as fellowships at numerous universities. I was fortunate to receive my first choice, the National War College and after relinquishing command in Korea we packed up for Washington D.C.

If you were keeping count, it had been just six years since we left Intermediate Level Education in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas but what a trip it had been! Four of those six years were outside of the continental US with two of those years’ unaccompanied deployments. All six years were spent in the most rewarding, but the toughest assignments of my career. The bottom line, my young family and I were pretty spent and the Senior Service College was a much needed break.

We settled in the North Virginia area which, once you get past the sticker shock, is a great place to stay. The National War College, a part of the National Defense University (NDU), is located on the very picturesque post of Fort McNair. Nestled on the banks of the Potomac, Fort McNair’s claim to fame (other than housing NDU) is the post once served as the location where the Lincoln assassination conspirator, Mary Surrat was tried, convicted and later hanged. Supposedly her ghost still haunts some of the buildings that were around during the period! McNair and the NDU campus are beautiful and the location is unbeatable, just a few easy Metro stops to the best spots in our nation’s capital.

Again, I reported to this academic environment on day one with some anxiety. Not so much about the academics as I had built up some confidence over the years in my ability to complete academic course work, but rather apprehension about fitting in with the company I would be keeping over the next year. National War College students are the top leaders in our nation and many are destined to serve our nation in the highest capacity. The class numbered a little over 200 and consisted of 40 students from each of the four services, as well as 40 from US government agencies to include Department of Defense, Department of State, USAID, Department of Homeland

Security, and some three letter agencies we aren't supposed to talk about. Additionally, there was a contingent of foreign students, almost all General Officers, who followed a slightly modified academic curriculum over the year. The NWC features some famous alumni to include former Secretary of State Colin Powell, Secretary of Defense James Mattis and Senator John McCain just to name a few of the numerous national level leaders who passed through the halls of the NWC.

It was at this point I came to a few realizations about my own service to the nation. As mentioned earlier, I was not exceptionally well rounded at the strategic level, sure I understood the concepts, but had zero practical experience unlike many of my fellow NWC colleagues. I also realized I had never given one singular moment of thought to my military service post battalion command. Some, not all, of my classmates at NWC were the polar opposite. O5 command and SSC were just stepping stones in a bid for General Officer or civilian Senior Executive. While I did not fear hanging with these folks academically, I could not mirror their intensity or passion for executive level service. Although this opportunity signified a new chapter in the careers of most of the NWC students, for me it was the first inclination that I was perhaps closing toward the end of the profession I loved.

The National War College is an accredited college and upon graduation students are conferred a Master of Science in National Security Strategy. Additionally, attendance at the National War College earns JPME level II certification as well as a required by law mandatory assignment (for most students) to a "joint coded billet", thus earning the military officer coveted "joint credit". These are both important requirements for those O6 level executive leaders who wish to stay competitive for future flag level promotion.

Courses are taught by senior (O6) officers and civilian professors, many holding degrees at the PhD level. SSC definitely possesses the academic rigor of a traditional graduate school. Writings are graded not only on content but also grammar, organization and research methods. Unique to the NWC, students are assigned to a "homeroom" where they

maintain small cubicles and their study materials. The homeroom serves as the base of operations for the year, but all the academic work is completed in small group classes (~18 students) that rotate every eight weeks. In this way, every student has an opportunity to meet and network with most of their fellow classmates.

Similar to ILE, but factored times ten, there is A LOT of reading. Reading triage is paramount and it is also more important than ever to actually do *most* of the reading. Instructors base course assessments on contributions to the discussions. You can imagine in a small group of 18 uber-type-A personalities (perhaps including a future Secretary of State or Defense), if you are not exquisitely prepared for class, you won't get a single word in! That being said, the course material, instructors and fellow classmates are absolutely top notch professional.

A unique aspect of the National War College is the uniform. Military attendees wear civilian business attire except for a few major briefings when they are expected to wear military dress uniforms. This was to level the playing field between uniformed / non-uniformed members of the student body and also give the military folks a taste of executive level attire. Luckily, I was able to update my severely lacking business wardrobe before returning home from Korea!

While more demanding than any of my previous military academic experiences, it was overall very enjoyable and I daresay I learned more in these 10 months (about a lot of things) than in my other academic experiences. Listed below are the courses from my NWC academic "year". There are a few elective opportunities but the majority of the courses are part of the common core.

Strategic Leader Foundational Course

The Soldier and the State

Introduction to Strategy

War, Statecraft and the Military Instrument of Power

The Non-military Instruments of Power

The Domestic Context and U.S. National Security

Decision Making

The Global Context

National Security Strategy Practicum Applications in National Security Strategy Individual Strategy Research Project

Another great benefit of NWC is its proximity to our nation's government. During our academic year, we met a Supreme Court Justice, a few congress members, sitting members of the National Security Council (NSC) and even the Vice President stopped by! I recall during one of the forums with a NSC member the speaker joking, "I hope you all can figure this Syria thing out because we don't have a clue!" While the comment was made in jest, there was probably a grain of truth. It was during my time at NWC one of my long held fallacies, that there were people at the highest level of our government tucked away in a secret room somewhere who were just figuring out answers to the world's toughest problems, was debunked! My classmates and I were the ones who would eventually have to develop the answers to national security problems.

Even more so than my other academic experiences, the National War College relied heavily on the Socratic method of learning. This in of itself was very rewarding as the opinions from the student body on a particular topic were generally quite diverse. A State Department officer with years serving in consulates abroad, certainly has a different perspective than an Army officer. Similarly our foreign classmates brought a unique and sometimes controversial perspective to discussions.

The highlight of the academic year was our national security strategy practicum, during which we selected a particular country to analyze, then developed a U.S. strategic approach to solve a certain problem. I was fortunate to get my first choice of countries to study, Israel! After eight weeks of research, our small group traveled to Israel for a week long journey looking at many aspects of US strategic concerns in the region (as well as visiting some of the amazing historical and religious sites). I am not sure how much our group of twelve neophyte strategists were actually able to solve, but I know we all grew from the experience and were better strategic leaders for it.

The writing assignments at NWC were fewer in number but longer in length. Content was paramount but the instructors also placed emphasis on grammar and how the thoughts were organized into a coherent message. This differs from ILE where instructors just needed to confirm whether a student “got it”. Our NWC faculty reiterated the importance of the “30 second elevator speech”, presumably delivered to the Secretary of State or Defense. In this light, we were pushed to write very effectively and make every word count. I thought I was pretty good at a bottom line style of writing but realized after my first few assignments I was just an amateur. The NWC taught us to delete all non-essential words and communicate our messages as efficiently as possible.

We will examine three writings from the National War College curriculum, assigned during approximately the beginning, middle and end of the academic experience. Our first writing for review was from the “Foundations of Strategic Thinking” course. Although early during the curriculum, we had already poured over numerous texts and class room exercises that gave students a working ability to dissect and develop strategy. Specifically, analyzing the strategic environment, developing basic assumptions, identifying national interests, then getting into the heart of developing the ways and means that achieve a desired end state.

What made this assignment unique is that our task was to develop the analysis required to produce a 2015 National Security Strategy- for Russia! If you’ve ever read our own U.S. National Security Strategy you know these documents are top level guiding frameworks but contain all the key points needed for strategic direction. To prepare for the paper we had to do a fair bit of research on Russia history and make some assumptions about how Russian leadership and Vladimir Putin might view their national interests. I am sure a Russian expert would cringe at some of the assertions in this paper but it was a great exercise to get us thinking about strategy development but more importantly for understanding the strategic environment for potential competitors.

Take note of the concepts and style at play in this writing. Can you see progression in content and format from the direct

leadership years? How about from organizational leadership PME? Important to note again, this Senior Service College writing assignment on a strategic / executive leadership theme is just seven years removed from initial exposure to concepts such as “DIME” (diplomacy, information, military and economic). As a strategic leader we are no longer concerned with the organizational culture of small units but rather the national interests of a near peer competitor!

Analysis for the Development of the 2015 Russia National Security Strategy (A Hypothetical Russian Perspective)

“At last, Russia has returned to the world arena as a strong state - a country that others heed and that can stand up for itself.”

–President Putin 2008, regarding Russia’s hosting the 2014 Winter Olympics

The primary goal of President Putin and the Russian people should be to regain global recognition as a premier state. Russia’s rightful place as a global leader in the world order steadily waned over the past 20 years and recent events indicate there are those who seek our continual decline. This singular focus must permeate every strategy and application of Russian national power as we look to regain Russia’s role as a preeminent superpower within the next two decades. The path to this goal will not prove easy and every step must be carefully calculated but our great nation is no stranger to this journey. Recent strategic missteps by our competitors and a fluid global economy presents unique opportunities to advance our core national interests across the globe. In order to successfully achieve our ultimate goal of regaining superpower status we must analyze the net effects of threats, opportunities, and objectives as they impact our vital national interests in order to develop a coherent national security strategy.

Russia’s primary and most vital national interest remains the physical security of our citizens, our expansive borders, and our economic infrastructure. Our people know well the horrors of war and wish to avoid it but will do whatever required to defend the motherland. Recent threats to this most critical national interest includes overt attempts by Western powers to pull Russian Border States into their spheres of influence thereby limiting our economic opportunities and potentially placing foreign forces at our doorstep. Additionally we face the growing threat from extremist ideologies as practiced by transnational terrorists. Lastly China’s growing economic and military power poses a potential threat to our frontier borders and trade routes. Russia should develop a strategy that applies

diplomacy to address these challenges but if diplomacy fails Russia must be prepared to apply hard power to include military force as recently demonstrated in Crimea. While these threats are daunting there are many opportunities to be leveraged towards accomplishing subsidiary goals within this vital national interest.

Although the West seeks to increase their influence in Eastern Europe they are currently overextended and weary of foreign affairs after 13 years of entanglement in the Middle East. This presents an excellent opportunity for a relatively unhindered Russia over the next five years to execute an aggressive strategy that through political or other means will reconsolidate influence in key Border States including the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Mongolia, and Belarus with the goal of building a Russian led security alliance. Likewise the global war against extremist ideology and terrorism presents an opportunity for Russia to cooperate as necessary with the West against this common enemy while simultaneously securing our state and showing the world that Russia remains a trusted ally against evil.

Lastly we have an excellent opportunity to achieve our objective of thwarting any potential Chinese expansion by capitalizing on the current global demand for high tech weapons and reinvigorating our military industrial complex. Although 20% of our manufacturing workforce is already committed to the defense industry⁸¹, over the next 10 years Russia should establish a goal of increasing central government supported research, development, and foreign military sales in order to replace the United States as the world's leading conventional arms exporter⁸². This would not only provide our economy a much needed boost but it will also undoubtedly help secure our borders and propel Russia towards superpower status. A Mongolia, India, or Kazakhstan armed with the latest world class Russian military hardware and trained by Russia's

⁸¹ RIA Novosti, "Russian Defense Industry Production up 25% in 1Q09," accessed on September 24, 2014, <http://en.ria.ru/russia/20090602/155148607.html>.

⁸² RIA Novosti, "Russian Arms Sales at \$14 Billion in 2012" accessed on September 24, 2014, http://en.ria.ru/military_news/20121217/178216645.html.

best military experts should certainly compel China to cease overtures towards expansion in the region.

Hand in hand with our vital interest of physical security is our second core interest to achieve economic prosperity. It is no secret that Russia's economy is sustained primarily on profits gained from the export of hydrocarbon fuels and that much of our economic infrastructure is controlled by oligarchs who may not have the state's best interests in mind. This presents a tremendous threat to our very sovereignty as potential adversaries could increase production in order to fix global prices on Russia's primary commodities and bankrupt our nation. Now is the time to develop a national strategy that demands sweeping economic reform. Subsidiary goals within this national interest must include diversifying our economy to increase the 37% of GDP currently in industry to 60% within the next 20 years and transition from a predominantly internal consumer based economy to truly a free trade export economy. Milestone goals for this effort will entail renewed government regulation of the oligarchs, extensive investment in infrastructure, and a concerted effort to court foreign business to make Russia a premier choice for foreign investment. Tied to sweeping internal economic reforms Russia must re-think its foreign investment and export practices.

The changing face of the global economy especially in developing nations along the Pacific Rim, South, and Central America presents a superb opportunity for Russia to advance its economy over the next 20 years. Currently six of our seven major export partners are European including Belarus and Ukraine; likewise our import partners remain predominantly European⁸³. Russia should shift its reliance on trade with Europe and identify the next "Asian Tiger" nations (i.e. South Korea, Japan) in order to establish key trade partners thereby gaining leverage over the United States and China. Beyond the export of military equipment and commodities Russia should establish a goal to increase technology sharing, resource development, and business investment with nations such as Vietnam, Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, India, and the

⁸³ CIA, "CIA World Fact book: Russia" accessed on September 24, 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs.html>.

Philippines over the next decade. We should maintain our trade agreements with the United States and China but Russia must win the race in partnering with those developing countries within the periphery of the Asia and Europe land masses who traditionally have played a major role in the rise or fall of past empires.

In order to stimulate economic prosperity and provide for the security of the motherland Russia's national security strategy must also address our third core interest of promoting Russian ideals at home and abroad. We are no longer in a global struggle between ideals of communism and capitalism but rather a competition between the West's brand of liberal Democracy and Russia's unique form of Democracy. Russia faces an immediate threat of the West winning this struggle which could relegate Russia to 2nd order status for the foreseeable future. In order to promote Russian ideals our strategy should include quick win milestones such as entering into key environmental accords, pandemic prevention alliances, and nuclear arms limitation agreements that will reassure the World that we remain committed to the advancement of humanity at large. Russia must take advantage of the opportunity that presents itself in the United States current political divisiveness and the apparent ebb of communism in China. Russia's 5% unemployment as well as 11% poverty rates are better than the United States, proof of our growing middle class, and exemplify to developing nations that Russia's over 20 year old venture into Democracy may not be perfect but is developing and working⁸⁴. Most importantly we must promote our Russian ideals and Eurasian identity that uphold many core values that people across the world are desperately seeking in their own societies.

In this world of ever changing values Russia is on the verge of an opportunity to become the beacon for time tested traditional values that are quickly fading in many other nations. Many of these values were forged by our Eastern Orthodox roots but shaped by the diversity of our people to include the influences of Asian, Muslim, Roman, Greek, Turk, and Slavic

⁸⁴ CIA, "CIA World Fact book: Russia" accessed on September 24, 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/rs.html>

cultures. Russia's position is very clear on many social issues that stimulate considerable debate in the West and the citizens of many nations across the world share our position. Russia's strategy must achieve goals of promoting these common ideals through various means to those nations on the periphery of the Europe and Asia land masses as well as in Africa and the Americas. Unlike during the Soviet era Russia should not waste its precious resources on those third world, rogue, and dysfunctional nations such as North Korea, Afghanistan, or Cuba but rather strengthening our relationships with those nations displaying characteristics for change and progression such as South Africa, Vietnam, and India in order to pull these rapidly developing nations into the Russian sphere. Simultaneously our strategy should maintain the spread of Russian ideals through diplomacy in those countries that are at cross roads to include Syria, Iran, Egypt, and numerous others. The resulting objectives of this expansive social and diplomatic outreach effort should include establishing military, trade, and cooperative assistance alliances across the globe that within 20 years will guarantee Russia regains its position as a preeminent world power.

Russia's number one goal should be to regain status as a global super power and this can only be achieved with a carefully developed security strategy that takes into consideration the threats, opportunities, and objectives as they relate to our three vital national interests. By developing ways to guarantee our physical security, promote economic prosperity, and spread Russian ideals globally we can achieve our primary goal. In developing these strategies one must always remember the opponent gets a vote. Any of the aforementioned concepts could be viewed as antagonistic and most likely would be countered by the West and / or China. Despite Russian historical distrust of foreign entities perhaps the nation must now remain transparent of our intentions so that the world will understand our intent. While our potential opponents will surely still voice opposition to our desired ends this in of itself will lend credibility to our position and illuminate those who desire to curb our prosperity. Russia and indeed the world are enjoying a prolonged era of peace and

prosperity, the conditions are set for Russia to capitalize on this stability and become a world leader again.

Our next writing assignment from the strategic leadership years for your consideration was definitely one of the most interesting academic tasks in my military career. This paper was a “term” paper for “War, Statecraft, and the Military Instrument of Power” and harkened back to some of the more research intensive graduate work completed earlier in my academic journeys. Students were to choose a historical strategic decision and perform an analysis on the decision.

This is where my peers who were better exposed to strategic / executive level decision making definitely had a leg up on selecting their topic. I was a little lost at first but ended up doing what I’ve always done and selected a topic that was of interest to me; luckily my instructor approved! Students were required to submit the sources review, outlines and other key milestones for a formal research paper. Initially, I thought I chose poorly as I had a tough time finding sources until I happened on a wonderful book by the historian, Reverend Wilson Miscamble entitled, *The Most Controversial Decision: Truman, the atomic bombs, and the defeat of Japan*.

I wanted to explore the U.S. decision to use atomic weapons in WW II from a strategic decision making perspective and Rev. Miscamble’s work provided incredible insights to this topic. Some may argue whether use of atomic weapons was strategic in nature (especially in a 1945 context) and my conclusions may be debatable but I really enjoyed analyzing this important moment in world history. Another disclaimer (I know you got it, but bears repeating), the conclusions in this essay are my own and made through an academic “strategic analysis” lens. The world would probably be a better place if nuclear weapons were never invented, but unfortunately that’s not the world we live in.

This paper is of the same ilk as my earlier research paper on effects of the Vietnam War on USMA, quite a leap in the gravity of topics from the direct leader to the strategic leader!

A Strategic Analysis of President Truman's Decision to Use Atomic Weapons

Before beginning an analysis of President Harry Truman's decision to employ atomic weapons against Japan it is prudent to review at a very broad level the most basic factual outcomes of the decision. At Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the 6th and 9th of August respectively 135,000 Japanese were killed instantly and the cities razed to the ground.⁸⁵ Many more Japanese died in the following years of radiation sickness. Less than a week after the attacks Japanese Emperor Hirohito unconditionally surrendered to the Allied powers effectively ending WWII, a war that by some estimates cost 50 million lives across the globe during the course of the conflict.⁸⁶ It is the diagnosis of this second outcome through the lens of Thucydides' three motivations for war - fear, honor, and interest, that this study asserts President Truman made the correct decision to employ atomic weapons against Japan.⁸⁷ Solely based on an analysis of his military strategy, President Truman made the necessary choice as it successfully achieved US vital national interests, allayed American fears about prolonging the war, and played to America's desire for honor following its significant contribution to ending WWII.

Many would argue that an analysis of Truman's decision to use atomic weapons must include a discussion of the moral implications of an action that left such a deadly and profound impact on the world. Truman did not perform an exorbitant amount of "moral calculus" *prior* to ordering the attacks on Japan and this essay will similarly follow suit.⁸⁸ However, before making this argument it is important to understand the strategic and moral context Truman was operating within in

⁸⁵ Allan R. Millet, Peter Maslowski, and William B. Feis. *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States from 1607 to 2012* (Free Press, New York 2012), 439.

⁸⁶ Wilson D. Miscamble, *The most controversial decision: Truman, the atomic bombs, and the defeat of Japan* (Cambridge University Press 2011), 119.

⁸⁷ Robert B. Strassleer, *the Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to The Peloponnesian War* (Free Press, New York 1996), 43.

⁸⁸ Miscamble, *The most controversial decision*, 123.

1945 to fully appreciate his decision making. By merely considering the violence that befell cities such as Shanghai, Nanking, Leningrad, Rotterdam, Coventry, London, Hamburg, Dresden, and Tokyo many WWII scholars suggest that in 1945 the world already crossed a “moral Rubicon” long before the atomic blasts in Japan.⁸⁹

History shows that Truman’s analysis of the facts in 1945 led to his assumption that the net death toll and destruction would be far greater the longer the war dragged on and that the bombs could hasten the end of the war. In terms of human loss and suffering Truman made the correct moral choice between the “lesser of two evils” to expedite the end of the war.⁹⁰ This is not meant to discount the moral questions surrounding the introduction to the world of a weapon that indiscriminately kills noncombatants and creates wholesale destruction in the blink of an eye. The deliberation of this question is better suited for an analysis of President Franklin Roosevelt’s 1941 decision to authorize development of the atomic bomb in the first place or for that matter Truman’s 1949 decision to authorize development of the infinitely more destructive nuclear bomb.⁹¹ The purpose of this paper is to analyze the strategy at play as Truman made his decision in 1945 and as a starting point through Thucydides lens of interest, one must first consider the United States vital national interests and the political objectives designed to achieve them.

In spring of 1945 the primary vital national interest for the newly established Truman Administration was national security and bringing about the rapid end of WWII was the primary political objective to achieve this interest. The atomic bomb was one of many means to achieve this end. In April 1945, Harry Truman ascended to the presidency upon the death of President Franklin Roosevelt and endeavored to “continue both the foreign and domestic policies of the Roosevelt Administration.”⁹² As he received his initial briefings from his military advisors all assumptions were that the war with

⁸⁹ Miscamble, *The most controversial decision*, 119.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 6,149.

⁹² Miscamble, *The most controversial decision*, 20.

Germany would conclude soon but although victory was in sight, the war with Japan would drag on for another 18 months.⁹³ Some key driving factors initially understood by F.D.R's administration but adopted by Truman included the desire for a post war world organization under U.S. leadership, the concept of Russia as a vital wartime as well as future post war ally, and most importantly to this discussion, that the atomic bomb in development *would* be used on either Germany or Japan to expedite the conclusion of W.W.II.

On the 2nd of May Truman established an "Interim Committee" chaired by the Secretary of State to determine not *whether* but *how* the atomic bomb would be used against Japan.⁹⁴ While it is hard to envision this line of thought, with the hefty benefit of hindsight, it must be understood that Truman, his cabinet, and the U.S. military at the time viewed the atomic bomb as another weapon in their arsenal that's use was inevitable. There was very little dissent. At no time did key military or national leadership intend to develop a U.S. strategy for defeating Japan that depended solely on use of the atomic bomb.⁹⁵ It is for this reason that the four initial targets selected by war planners after specific guidance from Truman were military industrial centers and not Japanese cities with deep psychological significance such as the ancient capital of Kyoto or the current capital of Tokyo.⁹⁶ The bomb was meant as a complement not as a replacement for the other military and diplomatic instruments of power already in effect to include a naval blockade, conventional bombing, Soviet entrance into the conflict, as well as the anticipated allied invasion of the Japanese main island.⁹⁷ The primary political objective for Truman's strategy was to bring about the end of the war quickly and save American lives. His decision to use the atomic bomb helped achieve both objectives successfully.

Many critics of the bomb's use argue that this explanation of Truman's political objectives is too shallow, that there must

⁹³ Ibid., 29.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 33.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 46.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 44.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 89.

be greater political motives regarding atomic diplomacy involved. It is critical to note and to counter these arguments that all evidence clearly indicates Truman did not view the Atomic bomb as a means to achieve political ends.⁹⁸ Key to remember that Truman in 1945 and F.D.R before him viewed the Soviet Union as an important war and future peace time ally. Nowhere is this more evident than at Truman's one (and only) meeting with Soviet Generalissimo Stalin in Potsdam, Germany in July of 1945. Truman remarked with sincerity of how he held the "kindest of feelings in the world toward Russia."⁹⁹

Truman even considered sharing atomic technology with the Soviets and hinted directly to Stalin about the bombs existence during Potsdam.¹⁰⁰ There exists no written record that Truman entered the Potsdam conference viewing atomic weapons as a diplomatic "ace in the hole" or that this entered his decision making at any time in his choice to employ the weapons. The United States stance towards the Soviet Union was largely conciliatory as evident by the willing concessions regarding Eastern Europe that the president made at Potsdam. Just as importantly as national interest, President Truman went forward with the employment of the atomic bomb out of an overwhelming fear (shared by the majority of Americans) that unacceptable loss of U.S. lives would occur during the anticipated invasion of Japan.

Japan was on the strategic defensive in 1945 yet the objective of defeating Japanese forces remained a daunting task for the United States. Although a naval blockade was cutting much needed materials to a trickle, Japan still possessed a credible capability to wage war. In the summer of 1945 Japan was busy implementing their Ketsu-Go (decisive operations) by repositioning Soldiers, preparing Kamikazes, and Naval forces near Kyushu where they correctly assumed the American invasion and their climactic battle would occur.¹⁰¹ Based on the ferocious resistance displayed by Japanese forces

⁹⁸ Miscamble, *The most controversial decision*, 35.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁰¹ Miscamble, *The most controversial decision*, 50.

at Okinawa where Kamikazes and Japanese Soldiers fought literally to the last man, General MacArthur assumed that in the opening days of the Kyushu invasion American casualties would total 105,000 or over 35% of the invasion force as well as hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilian and military casualties.¹⁰²

On the 18th of June President Truman authorized Operation Olympic, the Allied landing at Kyushu, set for the October time frame. As he departed for the Potsdam conference in July he committed himself to gaining Stalin's assurance that the Soviets would enter the war in order to contain those Japanese forces still in Manchuria.¹⁰³ At Potsdam Stalin agreed to enter the war against the Japanese and on the 8th of August shortly after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Soviet forces attacked Japanese positions in Manchuria.¹⁰⁴ While helpful in placing additional pressure on the Japanese emperor, this was most likely the Soviet Union hurrying their offensive in order to extend their presence as far in Asia as possible to gain political leverage. Lastly, the American's devastating conventional bombing campaign that began in May 1945 leveled Japan's largest cities including Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Yokohama. Hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians died yet the militaristic Japanese leadership made no indication that they sought peace.¹⁰⁵

These facts prompt critics of Truman's decision to argue that Japanese surrender was inevitable. Quite the contrary there is an abundant amount of evidence that clearly indicates the Japanese had no intention of surrendering unconditionally. Truman was forced into a strategic decision to use atomic weapons in order to help mitigate as much as possible the bloodshed expected during the American invasion of the Japanese homeland. Militaristic leaders held a powerful grip over Japan and on the 25th of July when the Allies sent a demand for unconditional surrender (which contained a veiled warning of the imminent atomic attacks), the Japanese

¹⁰² Ibid., 50.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 51.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 90.

¹⁰⁵ Miscamble, *The most controversial decision*, 48.

publically rebuked the offer. The Japanese Prime Minister remarked “for the enemy to say something like that means circumstances have arisen that force them also to end the war.”¹⁰⁶ Incredibly even after the destructive force of the atomic bombs were revealed the militaristic and peace factions of the emperor’s war cabinet could not come to a consensus on surrender. Even just prior to the release of Japan’s surrender message militaristic leaders within the government attempted a coup against the emperor in order to keep the war going.¹⁰⁷

By considering their massive preparations to defend against the Kyushu invasion it is clearly evident that in the Summer of 1945 Japan had no intention of surrendering and that without the addition of the devastating effects of the atomic weapons to hasten the Emperor’s decision making, the war would be prolonged. The fear of a nightmare invasion of the Japanese main island undoubtedly led Truman to not flinch for a moment when he correctly decided on the use of atomic weapons. Japan’s sense of honor kept them from accepting the terms of the Allied unconditional surrender. Ironically, the use of the atomic bombs also allowed Japan to maintain even a small semblance of honor as they surrendered. Thucydides concept of honor as a reason why man fights is the third lens by which this analysis will show that Truman made the correct decision.

Prior to discussing the role of honor in his decision making, it is important to recall that Truman did not view the atomic weapons as a political lever going into the Potsdam conference. There is however abundant evidence that indicates he fully embraced American exceptionalism regarding the United States post war role and that he understood that the U.S. possession of this mega weapon would eventually impact U.S. foreign relations. In the words of historian Wilson Miscamble, Truman brought to the presidency “a firm belief that a peaceful postwar world depended upon the adoption by the United States of world leadership in both the political and economic spheres.”¹⁰⁸ Similarly after learning of the Manhattan Project’s

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 80.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 105.

¹⁰⁸ Miscamble, *The most controversial decision*, 26.

existence during his first few days in office, Truman fully realized the importance of implementing a system of controls regarding atomic weapons and he often deliberated if the U.S. should share this technology.¹⁰⁹ The task to answer these questions fell largely on Truman's "Interim Committee" led by future Secretary of State James Byrnes.

Before the bombs were dropped it is worthy to note that approval to use the weapons was with the full endorsement of the British government.¹¹⁰ Despite the altruistic nature of these initial thoughts on the collaborative approach to atomic weapons, Truman indicated almost immediately after the bombs fell that he clearly viewed the United States as the master of this new technology. In his ninth of August radio address to the American people Truman remarked that "the atomic bomb is too dangerous to be loose in a lawless world," and that the "secret of production" would not be revealed "until the means have been found to control the bomb."¹¹¹ He further reassured the American people that the United States would remain "trustees of this force" for the immediate future.¹¹² Perhaps the quote that best encapsulates Truman and arguably most of America's exceptionalism towards the atomic bomb are contained in the conclusion of his nine August radio address when he said, "we thank God that it has come to us, instead of to our enemies; and we pray that He may guide us to use it in His ways and for His purposes."¹¹³

It was not until November 1945 that the U.S. formalized its agreement to share atomic technology with Canada and Britain and even later in 1946 before Congress established a civilian organization to limit U.S. military control of atomic weapons.¹¹⁴ While the bomb was not initially used as political leverage, it is clear to see its role in the beginnings of U.S.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 32.

¹¹⁰ Ibid. 115.

¹¹¹ Truman, Harry S., "Radio Report to the American People on the Potsdam Conference 09 August 1945," Public Papers of President Harry S. Truman, accessed November 11, 2014.
<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/publicpapers/?pid=104>.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Miscamble, *The most controversial decision*, 139, 146.

exceptionalism and aspirations towards establishing an atomic monopoly. Although U.S. leadership most likely saw the coming bi-polar Soviet – U.S. world, at this particular snapshot in time the U.S. maintained a generally amicable relationship with the Soviet Union. The relationship did not sour significantly until almost a year after the bombs fell and atomic weapons had little to do with creating the divide. American honor played a key role in Truman’s decision to use the atomic bombs and quite accidentally there is an ironic outcome where honor played a significant role surrounding the use of atomic weapons.

Completely unanticipated by the Americans, the use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki gave the honor “out” emperor Hirohito needed to surrender his nation to the allies and some would argue set the conditions for a successful post war occupation. As previously stated the internal battle between the militaristic elements of Emperor Hirohito’s war cabinet and those that sought peace was immense. Honor played an immeasurable role in the Japanese psyche when considering surrender. By dropping atomic bombs on Hiroshima, the United States (albeit completely unintentionally) gave the Japanese the means they needed to save face and blame the humiliation of surrender on American science rather than battlefield defeat.¹¹⁵

At no time in his recorded address on the 15th of August notifying the Japanese people of the war’s end did the emperor use the words “surrender,” “defeat,” or “capitulation” but he certainly referred to the “new and most cruel bomb” that could potentially result in the “obliteration of the Japanese nation.”¹¹⁶ Wilson Miscamble goes on to further suggest that the bombs “changed the whole dynamic of the occupation of Japan” and that “they facilitated a quick and easy surrender and a broadly cooperative populace in a way that no other method of military victory could have guaranteed.”¹¹⁷ While this unique perspective is certainly debatable it does add weight to the argument that through the lens of Thucydides’ “honor”,

¹¹⁵ Miscamble, *The most controversial decision*, 106.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 105.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 114.

Truman's strategic decision to drop atomic weapons was the correct one.

When analyzed through solely a strategic decision perspective and using the lens of Thucydides' fear, honor, and interest it is clear that President Harry Truman made the correct decision to employ atomic weapons to hasten the end of W.W. II. His decision clearly achieved U.S. vital national interests, assuaged the American public's fears about invading the Japanese homeland, and attained U.S. honor as the super power that ended W.W. II. Avoiding the inevitable discussion on morality and proportionality when analyzing Truman's decision may leave a shortfall to the complete understanding of the consequences of the decision but when considered as a military means of a larger national strategy within the context of 1945 it is evident that he chose correctly. This is not to suggest that the method to develop this strategy and reach the decision was without flaw. With the benefit of nearly 70 years of hindsight it is important for today's strategic planner to consider the valuable insights learned by considering the faults within Truman's strategic decision making that time has revealed.

First and foremost there was very little objectivity in Truman's decision to employ atomic weapons as group think prevailed within his administration. Perhaps due to Truman and his administrations' steadfast loyalty to the goals and memory of the iconic F.D.R., the decision to drop atomic bombs was mostly a foregone conclusion when Truman took the oath of office. There was little or no consideration of critics against employing the weapons. Although the overall outcome was successful this episode of rampant group think at the highest levels could have potentially produced an equally disastrous outcome.

Closely related to the lack of objectivity was a certain naivety that the foreign relation adverse Truman and consequently those diplomats he surrounded himself with possessed. As history showed, Truman (and F.D.R.'s) assumptions about the Soviet Union as well as China's post war intentions and dispositions could not have been more wrong. A memorable quote from Truman that captures his

blindness to the future geopolitical situation occurred on the evening of August the 14th as he announced the Japanese surrender on the White House lawn by proclaiming, “this is the day for free governments in the world. This is the day that fascism and police governments ceases in the world.”¹¹⁸ Perhaps this is what America needed to hear at the time but clearly these remarks indicated that President Truman and his administration were very short sighted in their foreign policy. Because of his naivety he potentially missed an opportunity to use the atomic weapon as a critical post war political lever.

Lastly President Truman and his key staff did not fully consider the unintended consequences both positive and negative from his decision to employ atomic weapons. As already stated some would argue that the use of atomic weapons enabled a beneficial post war peace with Japan that established an invaluable ally in the Pacific region completely committed to anti-communism, democracy, and capitalism.¹¹⁹ But the most significant unintended consequence remains the fact that President Truman’s decision ushered in an atomic age which led to the creation of countless terrifying weapons that held the world in a delicate balance for decades. The enduring debate will undoubtedly remain whether President Truman’s strategic decision to employ atomic weapons in the summer of 1945 which achieved national interests, quelled American fears, and promoted U.S. honor was worth the cost of initiating a landmark revolution in military affairs that exists to this day.

Our last offering from the executive leadership professional military education phase ranks as my toughest academic assignment while in uniform. Coincidentally (and unbeknownst to me at the time), this paper also served as my last academic writing assignment in the military! The culminating graduation requirement from the National War College is a comprehensive “Individual Strategic Research Project” or ISRP. This project had all the requirements of a traditional graduate school thesis to include an assigned faculty advisor who ensured students met gates on time, a 30 page count minimum and an oral defense of the thesis.

¹¹⁸ Miscamble, *The most controversial decision*, 109.

¹¹⁹ Clayton, “American and Japanese Strategies in the Pacific War,” 732.

If you haven't already noticed, I enjoy getting the "two-fer" when it comes to selecting topics for papers (or books) and selected my thesis with this in mind. About the time we were required to select topics, I was notified my follow on assignment after the war college would be at the Missile Defense Agency (MDA). As a quick aside, I had requested assignment at the Pentagon (a request seldom heard at Army Human Resources) in an effort to gain exposure to executive / strategic level leadership in its truest form but was told no positions were available! I was vaguely familiar with MDA from working with the agency a few times over the years but knew I needed to learn a lot more in order to be a successful strategic leader at this unique Department of Defense agency. For this reason, I chose the ISRP topic "A Balanced Strategic Approach to U.S. Missile Defense" in order to learn as much as I could about U.S. missile defense policy prior to reporting to MDA.

Thankfully, the outstanding library at the National Defense University contained volumes on current and past missile defense strategies and policy. One of our many guest speakers while at the National War College was the future National Security Advisor, Lieutenant General HR McMaster. He had a sterling reputation amongst fellow Army officers of the time as a leader who was not afraid to speak his mind and recommend changes where needed. One of his signature talking points included his four fallacies of warfare, one of which he named "the vampire fallacy" or relying on technology as a strategy. His message was well received and it appeared to me on the surface, this seemed to be the direction we were going as a nation on National Missile Defense.

However, as I dove into the topic and considered that our nation spends well over \$500 Billion a year on defense with only \$10 Billion or so annually for the latest ballistic missile defense system technology, maybe the investment of treasure isn't that bad. In fact, it's probably not enough. Not only should the U.S. continue to spend on a technology solution to defeat a ballistic missile attack against the homeland, we should also use other instruments of national power to develop a

comprehensive strategy against the rogue nation ballistic missile threat.

I naively thought this premise would be well received by the faculty board with whom I had to defend my thesis. Given the administration at the time, perhaps an approach to missile defense strategy that included a little more D, I, and E of the DIME with a little less M would be a ground breaking idea. Not so! I thought for a minute during the nearly one hour defense of my thesis that I was going to be the first officer in the Army to flunk the war college! Alas, I made it through the defense and upon reflection perhaps the grilling I took was just to prepare me as an executive leader. I am quite confident the defense of my war college thesis pales in comparison to what our senior leaders receive during testimony to Congress.

As you work your way through the ISRP, note the concepts and the framework of strategy. This is the method by which we were instructed “how to think” in one of our nation’s premier strategic leadership institutions in 2015 and my assumption is the methodology hasn’t changed that much. Also note, in spite of my technologically challenged self, the paper includes a much more professional appearance. Deliverables produced during the direct and organizational leadership years didn’t require as much aesthetics to tell the story. Lastly, take note of the direct writing style. See how many useless words you can find, my guess is you won’t find many. This communication style was pounded into us at the National War College and I find myself still using it today!

A Balanced Strategic Approach to U.S. Missile Defense

"It is the policy of the United States to deploy as soon as is technologically possible an effective National Missile Defense system capable of defending the territory of the United States against limited ballistic missile attack (whether accidental, unauthorized, or deliberate) with funding subject to the annual authorization of appropriations and the annual appropriation of funds for National Missile Defense."

*National Missile Defense Act of 1999
106th Congress
January 22, 1999*

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Executive Summary: Missile defense is a required means within the U.S. National Security Strategy to address limited ballistic missile threats posed by rogue nations, but missile defense strategy lacks an appropriate balance of approaches. Seventy years of U.S. missile defense has relied solely on military capability to deter or defend against potential adversaries. In spite of this strategy, North Korea and Iran increased their quantitative and qualitative ballistic missile capabilities. Additionally, despite enormous technological successes, many challenges must be overcome to perfect the U.S. National Missile Defense system. After 70 years of development, U.S. missile defense efforts remain essentially hitting a bullet with another bullet. The United States should move "beyond the gunpowder" and develop complementing strategic approaches that address not only the ballistic missile symptom but more importantly the disease of rogue nations.

A balanced missile defense strategic approach should incorporate all instruments of national power. The United States must use diplomacy to change rogue nation behavior, launch domestic information campaigns to prepare the U.S. populace, and apply targeted economic sanctions to limit rogue nation's acquisition of critical Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) components. In the best case, this balanced approach will compel Iran and North Korea to abandon their ambitions to develop long range nuclear equipped ballistic missiles. Even if only partially successful, a balanced approach buys the U.S. military industrial complex the time it needs to perfect a National Missile Defense system the American people deserve and require by law.

Introduction to the Strategic Problem

Civilian leaders, military strategists, and technical experts in the United States work tirelessly to develop suitable ways to protect the nation from a potential adversary's attack. The United States decade's long pursuit of an anti-ballistic missile shield is one such means that sparks much debate. Regardless of the argument presented by opponents, the development of a system to defend the homeland against ballistic missile attack is required by U.S. law. The National Missile Defense Act, signed in 1999 by President Clinton directs, "it is the policy of the United States to deploy as soon as is technologically possible an effective National Missile Defense System." Few other means within the U.S. instruments of national power are addressed by such a specific charter.

Enormous resources have been poured into the research, development, and deployment of a National Missile Defense (NMD) system. Yet after 70 years of effort, U.S. missile defense relies entirely on complex technological capability best described as hitting a bullet with another bullet. It is time for the United States to move "beyond the gun powder" and seriously explore alternative strategic approaches for ballistic missile defense.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Admiral Jonathan Greenert used the expression "beyond the gun powder" during a lecture at NDU on March 11, 2015. He used the

By analyzing ballistic missile threats and current U.S. missile defense challenges it becomes clear missile defense is a necessary means within the National Security Strategy that requires complementing strategic approaches. Developing a balanced U.S. missile defense strategy which incorporates diplomatic, information, and economic instruments of power will achieve desired ends while the National Missile Defense system is perfected. In order to develop new strategic approaches, one must first understand the context driving the United States 70 year pursuit of a missile defense shield.

Understanding the Context

Nazi Germany introduced long range ballistic missiles to modern warfare during World War II and began a global race to develop increasingly lethal ballistic missile technology. The relative low cost, long ranges, and ease of production makes ballistic missiles the strategic weapon system of choice for many nations. Additionally, ballistic missiles are easy to hide and difficult for an enemy to target prior to launch. Once airborne, ballistic missiles are incredibly hard for the targeted adversary to defend against. Those nations that possess ballistic missiles coupled with a Weapon of Mass Destruction (WMD) warhead hold a military means that by its very nature creates fear within its enemies. Ballistic missiles have almost transcended the military instrument of national power and became a unique coercive lever for pursuit of national interests.

For the purpose of this strategic analysis, those potential adversaries which possess ballistic missiles are placed into two categories, reliable states and rogue states.¹²¹ Reliable states are those potential adversaries whose interests maybe at odds with the United States, yet they remain rational actors. Reliable states who possess significant ballistic missile inventories

expression in reference to U.S. Navy transformation, not to ballistic missile defense.

¹²¹ The term rogue is often used to describe the behavior of certain states in varying contexts. In the course of research on the topic of threat ballistic missiles, the terms rogue and reliable were not found in any scholarly works as a way to compare a nation's use of ballistic missiles as an instrument of power.

generally take adequate measures to safeguard their weapons and have established policies for considering their use. A ballistic missile attack by a reliable state against the United States would in some cases present an existential threat to the nation's survival. However, the likelihood of an accidental launch or a deliberate attack from a reliable state remains low.

Rogue states are those nations who rely on ballistic missiles as a significant instrument of national power to promote regional or global influence. Rogue states generally possess a more limited ballistic missile capability, but the leadership's rhetoric generates fear in those nations within range of their missiles. Rogue nation leaders may be rational yet they skillfully use uncertainty and brinkmanship to gain objectives. This creates a tense security environment where the smallest miscalculation could spark a conflict. Rogue states actively seek to increase missile inventories either through domestic production or the purchase of missile technology. The pursuit of WMD capability is almost a given for rogue states. Additionally, rogue states often proliferate missile technology to undesirable state and proxy actors.

While a deliberate or accidental ballistic missile attack from a reliable state cannot be completely dismissed, this is not the threat current missile defense strategy is primarily designed to address. In 2004, President Bush ordered the deployment of a National Missile Defense (NMD) system to address the limited ballistic missile threat posed by the remnants of the "axis of evil," North Korea and Iran.¹²² To understand current missile defense strategy, it is imperative to understand the ballistic missile threat posed by these two potential adversaries.

North Korea. North Korea's primary strategic objectives are to reunite the Korean peninsula under Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) terms and sustain the regime of Kim, Jung Un.¹²³ The DPRK maintains one of the world's largest conventional militaries and ballistic missile inventories

¹²² Richard Dean Burns, *The Missile Defense Systems of George W. Bush* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Security International, 2010), 95.

¹²³ Daniel A. Pinkston, *The North Korean Ballistic Missile Program* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2008), 2.

to counter a host of perceived external and internal threats. Over the past 70 years, North Korea and the Kim family have proven masterful at using this robust military instrument as a means to sustain the modern world's longest leadership dynasty.

During the 1960s, North Korea adopted a "two front war" operational concept that called for an aggressive special operations fight deep inside South Korea and a simultaneous conventional battle between forces along the heavily armed demilitarized zone.¹²⁴ This "two front" concept informs North Korea's strategy for the use of ballistic missiles. The DPRK's short to medium range ballistic missiles target numerous military and geopolitical assets within South Korea in order to degrade combat power and foment civil unrest amongst the populace. Longer range North Korean missiles target U.S. assets in Okinawa, Guam, Hawaii, or the U.S. mainland where a ballistic missile attack could compel the United States agreement to peace terms favorable for the DPRK.

North Korea began importing Soviet and Chinese missile technology in the 1960s. As relations with the Soviet Union and China soured, North Korea became increasingly proficient with its own missile production. By the 1980s the DPRK possessed an indigenous capability to produce long range ballistic missiles.¹²⁵ North Korea is, by some analyst's estimation, the Third World's leading supplier of missiles and related technology.¹²⁶ Currently there are an estimated 700 North Korean short and medium range ballistic missiles targeting critical South Korean and U.S. geopolitical assets.¹²⁷ More concerning for the United States is that soon North Korea may master its intermediate and intercontinental ballistic missile technology.

¹²⁴ Daniel A. Pinkston, *The North Korean Ballistic Missile Program* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, 2008), 5.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹²⁷ Donyeon Kim, "Fact Sheet: North Korea's Nuclear and Ballistic Missile Programs," The Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, July, 2013 accessed March 05, 2015, http://armscontrolcenter.org/publications/factsheets/fact_sheet_north_korea_nuclear_and_missile_programs/.

North Korea possess two intermediate range ballistic missile platforms. The DPRK has deployed 175 to 200 Nodong-1 intermediate range missiles. These missiles have an estimated range of 1,000-1,500 km and a payload of up to 1,000 kg.¹²⁸ The Nodong-1 is also road mobile which makes it easier to conceal from targeting. With modifications to payload, improved GPS guidance, and a WMD warhead this intermediate range missile could strike U.S. interests in Japan with deadly results. The Musudan-1 is North Korea's other intermediate range missile. Although still in the developmental stage, when operational the Musudan-1 will be capable of delivering WMD warheads to all of South Korea, Japan and Guam.¹²⁹

The DPRK entered the intercontinental ballistic missile race in the 1990's with its Taepodong-2 missile. A modified version of this missile is known as the Unha-2 space vehicle delivery system. Depending on payload size, the Taepodong-2 could deliver WMD as far away as Guam, Hawaii, Alaska, and large portions of the U.S. mainland.¹³⁰ This system was tested five times between 2006 and 2013 with its most successful flight occurring in December 2012, when in the Unha-2 configuration, it placed an object into low earth orbit.¹³¹ North Korea claims its Taepodong-2 / Unha launch vehicles are designed to place satellites into orbit. However, the UN Security Council and international community view space delivery vehicle technology as synonymous with Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) development.¹³² With improvements to guidance systems and miniaturization of nuclear warheads, the Taepodong-2 may become North Korea's ICBM that threatens the United States.

¹²⁸ Donyeon Kim, "Fact Sheet: North Korea's Nuclear and Ballistic Missile Programs," The Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, July, 2013 accessed March 05, 2015, http://armscontrolcenter.org/publications/factsheets/fact_sheet_north_korea_nuclear_and_missile_programs/.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

Even more concerning to U.S. leadership than North Korea's advanced ballistic missile program, are the WMD warheads that can be placed on top of them. Currently North Korea may possess from four to eight nuclear weapons and the nuclear materials to produce many more.¹³³ North Korea demonstrated nuclear capability in a series of underground tests in 2006, 2009 and 2013 with the latest test, producing a yield of several kilotons, estimated as the most successful.¹³⁴ After the February 2013 test, the North Korean government's official news agency issued a statement claiming that the nuclear test was a "miniaturized and lighter device with greater explosive force than previously."¹³⁵ This claim prompted the Defense Intelligence Agency in April 2013 to express "moderate confidence" that North Korea possessed the ability to place a nuclear weapon atop a ballistic missile.¹³⁶

This intelligence estimate was not corroborated by any other members of the intelligence community and questioned by the South Korean government, but the concern is clear.¹³⁷ Despite pressure from international sanctions, North Korea is closer than ever to becoming a nuclear power capable of attacking the United States. Currently North Korea must work through many technological challenges to improve the reliability of its ICBM program. Few analysts would offer a definitive timeline for North Korea's development of a nuclear equipped ICBM, however most would agree it is not a question of if, but when.

Iran. Although Iran does not operate within the same context as North Korea, it certainly appears they've borrowed from the DPRK's playbook. Iran possess a significant military instrument to counter perceived internal and external threats.

¹³³ Duneon Kim, "Fact Sheet: North Korea's Nuclear and Ballistic Missile Programs," The Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, July, 2013 accessed March 05, 2015, http://armscontrolcenter.org/publications/factsheets/fact_sheet_north_korea_nuclear_and_missile_programs/.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Like North Korea it uses its ballistic missile and WMD programs as coercive levers over the region to advance national interests. Iran benefits greatly from North Korea's missile technology proliferation and also has an indigenous capability to produce ballistic missile platforms. Iran's ballistic missile program is not as developed as North Korea's, but they currently pose a serious threat to important U.S. national interests within the region.

Iran deploys two types of intermediate range ballistic missiles capable of attacking Israel or Southern Europe with conventional munitions or an appropriately weaponized nuclear weapon. The Shahab-3 is a modification of the DPRK's Nodong-1 missile and has a maximum range of 2,000 km. Iran's estimated 50 Shahab-3 missiles each carry a payload of 1,200kg, are accurate enough to strike Israel's major cities, and are road mobile making targeting difficult.¹³⁸ Iran also possess the domestically produced Sejil. This missile is a nuclear capable, road mobile, intermediate ballistic missile with a maximum range of 2,000-3,000 km. The Sejil is quicker to employ since it is fueled by solid propellant.¹³⁹ In addition to its intermediate range platforms, Iran is developing satellite launch vehicles which could be modified into ICBMs capable of reaching central Europe or the United States.

Iran's Safir (ambassador) space launch vehicle is a two stage rocket which placed a small object in low earth orbit in 2009.¹⁴⁰ Although the Safir is capable of carrying only a 100 kg payload, analysts suggest that its existence is significant. Iran was the first of the rogue nations to produce an indigenous missile design that departed from the basic Soviet era Scud concept.¹⁴¹ Iran demonstrated that despite its isolation from the world, they possess a robust scientific community and are

¹³⁸ National Air and Space Intelligence Center, "Ballistic and Cruise Missile Threat," National Air and Space Intelligence Center, 2013, accessed February 10, 2015, <http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/threats/iran/ballistic-missile-program-overview/>.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Richard Dean Burns, *The Missile Defense Systems of George W. Bush* (Santa Barbara: Praeger Security International, 2010), 108.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

internally capable of advancing ballistic missile technology. It may be years before Iran reaches North Korea's level of ICBM capability, but as in the case of North Korea, it is not a question of if, but when Iran will possess capability to strike globally.

More troubling than Iran's ballistic missile achievements, are the many advancements of their nuclear weapons program. Speculation exists about activities taking place at Iran's numerous nuclear facilities. On the surface it appears Iran is begrudgingly cooperating with IAEA inspections. Yet, many believe that Iran does not disclose the full quantity of uranium and enrichment capabilities they possess. In November of 2014, Iran agreed to abide by the provisions of the Joint Plan of Action (JPA) for an additional six months. The JPA directs Iran to limit uranium enrichment to the 5% required to fuel nuclear reactors and disclose any higher enriched quantities on hand.¹⁴² Many suggest Iran's sudden cooperation is due to the effects of targeted economic sanctions or perhaps the recent opening of diplomatic dialogue.

What the international community knows for sure, is despite decades of sanctions Iran developed uranium enrichment capability and they possess enough materials to create a nuclear device. Some political pundits argue once Iran crosses the red line of achieving 90% enriched uranium (weapons grade), they can successfully produce a weapon within six months.¹⁴³ While this may be an ambitious estimate of Iranian ability to enrich, test, and weaponize a nuclear weapon, the point is well taken. Whether it is six months, eighteen months, or a number of years, the Iranians are closer than ever to gaining nuclear weapons and a delivery means to employ them. In response to the credible ballistic missile threat posed by Iran and North Korea, the United States established a missile defense strategy with objectives developed to address the threat.

¹⁴² International Atomic Energy Agency, "IAEA Board Reports on Iran 2011-2014," IAEA, December 3, 2014, accessed February 10, 2014, <https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/focus/iran/iaea-and-iran-iaea-reports>.

¹⁴³ Matthew Kroenig, "Time to Attack Iran," *Foreign Affairs*, 91 (January/February 2012): 76-86.

United States Interests and Objectives

1. The United States will continue to defend the homeland against the threat of limited ballistic missile attack.
2. The United States will defend against regional missile threats to U.S. forces, while protecting allies and partners and enabling them to defend themselves.
3. Before new capabilities are deployed, they must undergo testing that enables assessment under realistic operational conditions.
4. The commitment to new capabilities must be fiscally sustainable over the long term.
5. U.S. BMD capabilities must be flexible enough to adapt as threats change.
6. The United States will seek to lead expanded international efforts for missile defense.

Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report, U.S. Department of Defense, 01 February 2010

Missile defense as a means within the U.S. National Security Strategy directly addresses the United States vital national interest of physical security. Unlike some of the strategic means within the National Security Strategy, U.S. policy for ballistic missile defense is clearly articulated. The pursuit of a ballistic missile defense system is required by law which generates a level of scrutiny from both Congress and the public. Upon assuming office, President Obama directed the Department of Defense (DoD) to conduct a comprehensive review of U.S. missile defense strategy. The informative 61 page Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) Review published by the DoD in February of 2010 outlines clear objectives that guide missile defense strategy to achieve desired ends as required by the National Missile Defense Act.¹⁴⁴

Attaining these objectives relies on perfecting a sustainable military technological capability. To achieve these objectives,

¹⁴⁴ Department of Defense, "Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report," DoD, February 1, 2010, accessed December 3, 2014, http://www.defense.gov/bmdr/docs/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630_for%20web.pdf.

the United States established the Missile Defense Agency in 2002 whose mission is to “develop, test, and field an integrated, layered, ballistic missile defense system to defend the United States.”¹⁴⁵ Before analyzing current U.S. missile defense strategy, it is insightful to understand the basics of anti-ballistic missile defense and to look back at 70 years of U.S. missile defense efforts.

U.S. Missile Defense Capabilities and Strategic Concepts

There are four categories to consider when employing a means to destroy an enemy launched ballistic missile. The first category is the phase of flight in which the intercept is to take place, pre-launch, boost, mid-course or terminal. Second is the location of the interceptor, land, air, sea or space. Third is the kill mechanism used by the interceptor and the final category for consideration is the type / location of sensors used to track and intercept the target.¹⁴⁶

There are numerous challenges for developing an anti-ballistic missile system when considering just one of these four categories.¹⁴⁷ For instance, destroying an enemy ballistic missile in pre-launch phase seems an attractive option. However, many threat missile systems are mobile and almost always well hidden. During boost phase the targeted missile is moving very fast and the interceptor must be launched close to the intended target. The mid-course phase is when the threat ballistic missile is most vulnerable as it coasts at the top of its ballistic trajectory. But, this is also where threat missiles may maneuver or employ countermeasures to confuse targeting systems. Additionally an interceptor engaging in the mid-course phase must possess longer ranges to reach a target at exoatmospheric altitudes. Finally, during the terminal phase, anti-ballistic missile systems must discern the fast moving target from a multitude of surrounding debris just seconds before the ballistic missile’s impact.

¹⁴⁵ Missile Defense Agency, “Mission,” MDA, accessed April 29, 2015, <http://www.mda.mill>.

¹⁴⁶ Jacques S. Gansler, *Ballistic Missile Defense Past and Future* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University, 2010), 11.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 11-13.

When adding these challenges regarding only the phase of flight in which the ballistic missile is to be engaged to the considerations in the other three categories, it is easy to appreciate the complexity of ballistic missile defense technology. Over the years United States missile defense concepts have focused primarily on mastery of this complex technological capability. From the beginning of anti-ballistic missile defense in 1946, the United States pursued a strategy reliant on a qualitative military edge to deter or defend against a potential adversary's ballistic missile attack.

Historical Domestic Context. The history of United States missile defense can be framed into four periods: inception to U.S. entry into the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty (1946-1972), the ABM treaty to the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) (1973-1983), the SDI period (1984-1993), and the current era to include withdrawal from the ABM (1994-present).¹⁴⁸ Each of these periods are marked with technological breakthrough, controversy, and the perseverance of technological capability as the primary means for U.S. missile defense strategy.

Immediately following WWII the United States Army began studying the concept of using a guided missile to destroy another ballistic missile. When the Soviet Union successfully test launched an ICBM in 1957, anti-ballistic missile defense development suddenly became a top priority on the national security agenda.¹⁴⁹ In 1958, Secretary of Defense Neil McElroy stopped Air Force and Army infighting over missile defense responsibility by assigning the program to the Army. With the approval of President Eisenhower, he also issued National Security Resolution 5802 which called for “an anti-ICBM weapons system as a matter of the highest national priority.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Jacques S. Gansler, *Ballistic Missile Defense Past and Future* (Washington D.C.: National Defense University, 2010), 37-53.

¹⁴⁹ Missile Defense Agency, *Missile Defense: the First Seventy Years*, (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Printing, 2014).

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

By the mid-1960s, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara determined that the technological challenges and high costs of defending against a massive Soviet missile strike made a national missile defense system a less attractive national security means than either an arms reduction treaty or increased U.S. offensive capability.¹⁵¹ However, with China becoming a nuclear power in 1968, the Johnson administration reversed itself and ordered the deployment of the Sentinel ABM system around major U.S. urban centers. During this period U.S. anti-ballistic missile defenses were built around the most current version of the Army's nuclear tipped Sprint and Spartan interceptors. Additionally in the mid-1960s, the Navy and Air Force initiated their own anti-ballistic missile research programs.

Partly due to public concerns about nuclear tipped missiles deployed around major U.S. cities, President Nixon sought to reshape U.S. missile defense strategy. He directed Safeguard, the redeployment of ABM systems to defend key U.S. ICBM launch sites in the heartland. This offered the President leverage with the Soviets during the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) that culminated with the signing of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in May, 1972. The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty limited each country to only two (later revised to one) ABM site around a national command authority location or missile field and only 100 interceptors.¹⁵² At the time of the treaty the U.S. already established a Safeguard site at the missile base in Grand Forks, North Dakota. This was the only national missile defense location permissible until U.S. withdrawal from the treaty in 2002. Thus ended the first and longest period of U.S. national missile defense.

Under the restrictions of the ABM treaty, the U.S. continued research in anti-ballistic missile technology specifically shifting focus from nuclear tipped proximity kill interceptors to directed high energy warhead kill intercept solutions. It was during this 10 year period that the groundwork was laid for President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative

¹⁵¹ Missile Defense Agency, *Missile Defense: the First Seventy Years*, (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Printing, 2014).

¹⁵² Ibid.

(SDI). Reagan did not readily accept the Cold War strategy of mutually assured destruction and deterrence but rather sought a means to stop or limit a Soviet first strike.¹⁵³ President Reagan's public announcement in March of 1983 to launch SDI in order to determine the feasibility of developing a missile defense shield was met with harsh criticism and labeled by opponents as "Star Wars."

Although SDI never got much further than conceptualization and research, during this period the forerunner of the Missile Defense Agency, the Strategic Defense Initiative Organization (SDIO) was established to consolidate the nation's various missile defense programs. Additionally, even though the SDI concept of space based defense was soon abandoned, a key SDI principle of warhead kill (also known as hit to kill) intercept technology became a cornerstone of modern missile defense programs. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, President George H.W. Bush directed SDIO to develop a concept that defended the United States and its allies against limited ballistic missile strikes.¹⁵⁴

The modern period of U.S. missile defense began under President Clinton. It was under his administration that many of the key concepts of current missile defense strategy were born. Most significantly under the Clinton administration, the SDIO was renamed the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization and reoriented the missile defense program into two distinct components. As the first line of defense, Theater Missile Defense (TMD) encompassed those forward deployed missile defense systems designed to defend U.S. forces and allies' geopolitical assets in a theater of operations. TMD envisioned joint and combined forces using proven operational systems such as Patriot as well as systems under final development including THAAD, Aegis BMD and the Air Force airborne laser.

The other component of Clinton's reorganization of the missile defense program was designated as National Missile Defense (NMD). NMD sought to develop solutions for

¹⁵³ Missile Defense Agency, *Missile Defense: the First Seventy Years*, (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Printing, 2014).

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

defending the homeland against emerging ballistic missile threats posed by rogue states. NMD soon overtook TMD as a matter of national priority as increasingly bleak intelligence estimates about North Korean capabilities emerged. Partly due to pressure from Congress, in 1999 President Clinton signed into law The National Missile Defense Act which directed the development of a U.S. National Missile Defense system.

Current Capabilities and Strategy. The modern era of U.S. missile defense witnessed numerous technological achievements and a re-emphasis on deploying a National Missile Defense system for the homeland. Within the Theater Missile Defense (TMD) portion of U.S missile defense, the United States renewed its commitment to defend U.S. forces and allied geopolitical assets by improving capabilities and increasing the numbers of deployed systems.

Currently there are 15 U.S. Army PAC-3 Patriot battalions in the force. Of these 15, two thirds are forward deployed to Geographical Combatant Commands or on standby for short notice deployment. First introduced in the 1980s, the current version of the mobile, deployable, and combat proven Patriot system with the PAC-3 interceptor is the first line of defense for U.S. forces and interests abroad. The PAC-3 entered service in the mid 2000's and is a terminal phase, hit to kill interceptor that is very capable against threat short and medium range ballistic missiles.¹⁵⁵ Improvements to the Patriot's phased array radar and the development of a next generation interceptor will extend the Patriot system as a key component of Theater Missile Defense well into the future. Additionally, various versions of the Patriot system are sold via Foreign Military Sales to many U.S. allies around the world.

Extending beyond the capabilities of the Patriot system is the Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) System. Initially developed in the mid-90s and operational by 2008, this system with its powerful radar and higher reaching hit to kill

¹⁵⁵ Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, "Patriot Missile Defense System," MDAA, accessed April, 24, 2015, <http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-defense-systems/u-s-deployed-intercept-systems/patriot-missile-defense-system/>.

interceptor provides outstanding capability against threat intermediate and long range ballistic missiles. Currently only two batteries and a total of 50 THAAD interceptors are fielded, but future batteries are in production.¹⁵⁶ The THAAD's massive AN/TYP-2 radar is unique in that it is air transportable and can be deployed independent of the launchers. THAAD firing batteries and the AN/TYP-2 radar are currently deployed to the Combatant Commands.

Bridging the gap between Theater Missile Defense and National Missile Defense is the Navy's Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System. Currently deployed on 30 U.S. warships between the Pacific and Atlantic fleets, the Aegis' powerful AN/SPY-2 phased array radar coupled with the SM-3 interceptor can consummate boost and mid-course phase intercepts against short to intermediate range ballistic missiles.¹⁵⁷ In addition to the critical role Aegis BMD plays for Theater Missile Defense, the powerful SPY radar system is an integral part of the National Missile Defense sensor chain. Future developments of Aegis include increasing SM-3 capability against longer range ballistic missiles, and the deployment of "Aegis Ashore" ground based system as part of a European based missile defense system.¹⁵⁸ The Aegis BMD system was also purchased by the Japanese Navy.

Perhaps most significant about these three Theater Missile Defense systems is the incredible level of joint and combined interoperability achieved as they've matured during numerous deployments over the past two decades. This capability was recently demonstrated during Flight Test Interceptor- 01 (FTI-01) in 2012 when Aegis BMD, THAAD, and Patriot systems dispersed across an area of operations simultaneously detected, deconflicted, and intercepted five separate short and medium

¹⁵⁶ Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, "Terminal High Altitude Area Defense," MDAA, accessed April, 24,

2015 <http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-defense-systems/u-s-deployed-intercept-systems/terminal-high-altitude-area-defense-thaad/>

¹⁵⁷ Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, "Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense," MDAA, November 5, 2014, accessed April, 24, 2015,

<http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-defense-systems/u-s-deployed-intercept-systems/aegis-ballistic-missile-defense-system/>.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

range targets.¹⁵⁹ This capability is also rehearsed frequently by Aegis, Patriot, THAAD, and host nation partners during operational exercises conducted in the PACOM, EUCOM, and CENTCOM areas of responsibility.

The TMD component of United States missile defense strategy has proven successful and is achieving the stated objective to “defend against regional missile threats to U.S. forces, while protecting allies and partners.”¹⁶⁰ Forward deployed TMD assets are an effective means of the military instrument which contributed to keeping regional despots in their box over the past two decades. It certainly must weigh into an adversaries calculus when considering launching a ballistic missile strike against a U.S. ally whose geopolitical assets are protected by Patriot, THAAD, and Aegis. Yet, it is not the successful TMD component of U.S. missile defense strategy that is generally considered a matter of national priority. National Missile Defense and the deployed Ground Based Midcourse Defense (GBMD) system are the center of gravity for U.S. missile defense strategy.

The Ground Based Midcourse Defense interceptor is a three stage hit to kill design that destroys threat intermediate and long range ballistic missiles.¹⁶¹ As the name implies, the interceptor kills its target in the midcourse phase of flight and outside the earth’s atmosphere. Currently there are 30 such interceptors deployed and 14 more in production. Most of the deployed interceptors are located at Fort Greely in Alaska.¹⁶² The GBM system uses a robust global sensor array that is queued initially by low orbiting satellites designed to detect the infrared signature from a threat missile launch. Following

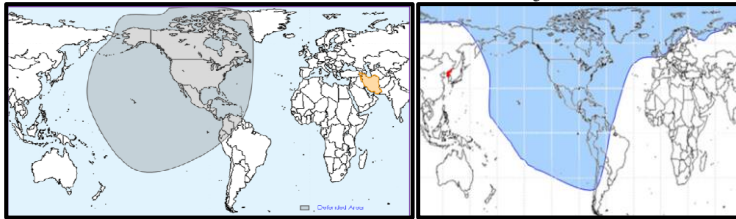
¹⁵⁹ Missile Defense Agency, *Missile Defense: the First Seventy Years*, (Fort Belvoir, VA: Defense Printing, 2014).

¹⁶⁰ Department of Defense, “Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report,” DoD, February 1, 2010, accessed December 3, 2014, http://www.defense.gov/bmdr/docs/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630_for%20web.pdf.

¹⁶¹ Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, “Ground Based Midcourse Defense,” MDAA, accessed April 24, 2015, <http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-defense-systems/u-s-deployed-intercept-systems/ground-based-midcourse-defense/ground-based-interceptor-exoatmospheric-kill-vehicle/>.

¹⁶² Ibid.

detection, a networked system of sensors tracks the target. Beginning with the forward deployed AN/TYP-2 and AN/SPY-2 radars up to the massive ground based radars in Alaska, California, Greenland, and the U.K., sensors pass targeting data through an integrated network to the fire control center at Fort Greely.¹⁶³ GBMD offers a large area of protection that achieves the “defend the homeland against the threat of limited ballistic missile attack” objective.¹⁶⁴



The shaded area within the image on the left depicts the area defended by the GBMD system from threats originating in North Korea. The image on the right depicts the area defended from threats originating in Iran.

Source: DOD, *Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report*. 01FEB10

Unfortunately the GBMD’s development and fielding were rushed in response to intelligence estimates of when North Korea would achieve an operational ICBM capability.¹⁶⁵ As a result the system requires continual development to overcome technological challenges. The massive interceptor does not contain an armed warhead but rather relies on kinetic energy from the Exoatmospheric Kill Vehicle (EKV) to destroy the target. To accomplish this the kill vehicle must possess an incredibly accurate system to discriminate between the threat

¹⁶³ Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, “U.S. Deployed Sensor Systems,” accessed April 24, 2015, <http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-defense-systems/u-s-deployed-sensor-systems/upgraded-early-warning-radars-uewr/>.

¹⁶⁴ Department of Defense, “Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report,” DoD, February 1, 2010, accessed December 3, 2014, http://www.defense.gov/bmdr/docs/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630_for%20web.pdf.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

warhead and debris surrounding the target. Although the global array of radars are the best of their kind, the GBMD still needs improved systems to guide the EKV from launch site in Alaska to a small target traveling in the exoatmosphere.¹⁶⁶

During 17 tests the GBMD system achieved a 53% success rate.¹⁶⁷ This pales in comparison to the fully developed and tested THAAD and Aegis systems whose success rates are 100% and 85% respectively.¹⁶⁸ Perhaps partly due to these technological challenges, the United States is no longer pursuing deployment of GBMD interceptors as part of a European missile defense system but rather a “phased adaptive” approach to European missile defense. This plan calls for the initial deployment of sea based Aegis BMD followed by the development and eventual deployment of ground based Aegis ashore systems in Europe by 2018.¹⁶⁹

Costs. When analyzing the fiscal cost of U.S. missile defense strategy it is key to point out that operations and maintenance costs for Theater Missile Defense systems are incurred by the service components. MDA’s budget provides for the operation and maintenance of the GBMD system as well as research, development, testing, and evaluation of future National Missile Defense systems. Estimates vary widely but GBMD has cost about \$30 billion since inception. MDA’s 2016 budget allocates a little over one billion a year to sustain the GBMD system.¹⁷⁰ Proponents of GBMD argue that less than 1% of a \$500 billion U.S. defense budget is a small price

¹⁶⁶ Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, “GBMD System Brief 1,” accessed April 24, 2015, <http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-defense-systems/u-s-deployed-intercept-systems/ground-based-midcourse-defense/system-brief-1-ground-based-midcourse-system/>

¹⁶⁷ Missile Defense Advocacy Alliance, “The Anatomy of a GBI Intercept Test,” accessed April 24, 2015, <http://missiledefenseadvocacy.org/missile-defense-systems/u-s-deployed-intercept-systems/ground-based-midcourse-defense/the-anatomy-of-a-gbi-intercept-test/>

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ Department of Defense, “Ballistic Missile Defense Review Report,” DoD, February 1, 2010, accessed December 3, 2014, http://www.defense.gov/bmdr/docs/BMDR%20as%20of%2026JAN10%200630_for%20web.pdf.

¹⁷⁰ Missile Defense Agency, “Budget Information,” MDA, accessed April 29, 2015, http://www.mda.mil/news/budget_information.html.

to pay for a national security priority regardless of technical challenges. The MDA since its beginnings as SDIO in 1985 has committed \$173 billion in non-inflation adjusted dollars towards the advancement of a National Missile Defense system and they operate on roughly a \$7 billion annual budget.¹⁷¹

Yet considering only recent fiscal expenditures, especially in this age of \$500 billion annual defense budgets, avoids the totality of the debate regarding cost of a National Missile Defense system. Over the past 70 years the United States committed untold amounts of treasure in pursuit of technological capability to shield the homeland from various ballistic missile threats. The massive sunk cost associated with the pursuit of a National Missile Defense system arguably makes its continuation inevitable. Fiscal costs are not the only bill the United States paid to implement its current missile defense strategy. The United States incurred a considerable political cost when it deployed a National Missile Defense system in Alaska and increased deployment of Theater Missile Defense systems overseas.

President Bush's speech at the National Defense University in May 2001 signaled the beginning of a shift in U.S. foreign policy as he sought to withdraw the United States from the ABM treaty.¹⁷² Recognizing the implications of the move, the Bush administration worked diplomatically to gain both China and Russia's "acquiescence" for the maneuver.¹⁷³ But, the 9/11 attacks hastened the United States plans to withdrawal from the treaty and the deployment of a NMD system. Over ten years after this milestone in U.S. missile defense strategy, the imminent threat of a nuclear ICBM equipped rogue nation has not materialized but the political costs are already spent. Withdrawal from the ABM treaty, deploying the GBMD system, and increasing forward deployed TMD capabilities further complicate relations with Russia and China who view deployed U.S. ballistic missile systems as destabilizing.

¹⁷¹ Missile Defense Agency, "Budget Information," MDA, accessed April 29, 2015, http://www.mda.mil/news/budget_information.html.

¹⁷² Lynn F. Ruston, *U.S. Withdrawal from the Antiballistic Missile Treaty* (Washington D.C.: NDU Press, 2010), 2-4.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

Despite the fiscal and political costs, the United States must continue to develop military technological capabilities to defend the homeland and U.S. interests abroad from ballistic missile attack. After 70 years of sunk fiscal and political costs for a National Missile Defense system, many United States elected officials would probably not consider abandoning the pursuit of such a means. Most importantly, there exists a credible threat of nuclear equipped rogue nations and U.S. law requires the development of a system to address this threat. The risk of not preventing a limited ballistic missile attack on the United States is another significant scar on the national identity similar to that of 9/11. It is debatable whether the United States could absorb another strategic misstep such as the government's failure to identify and prevent the 9/11 attacks.

With vast resources and American industrial ingenuity it is inevitable the United States will someday perfect the technology required for a sustainable ballistic missile shield. In the meantime, strategic planners must broaden their approach to missile defense and develop means to complement current U.S. missile defense strategy.

Alternative Missile Defense Strategic Approaches

In December 2014 President Obama made a statement explaining his new foreign policy approach towards Cuba. The President stated, "after all, these 50 years have shown that isolation has not worked. It's time for a new approach."¹⁷⁴ While many argue that he's done a poor job selling the benefits of this logic to the nation and allies, few could dispute the simplistic truth of his reason. It is with this perspective that the United States must consider alternative and complementing strategic approaches for missile defense.

For 70 years the United States has relied solely on technological capability and the military instrument to deter or defend against various ballistic missile threats. In spite of this strategy, potential adversaries have increased their quantitative and qualitative missile capabilities. Perhaps U.S. Army LTG

¹⁷⁴ President Obama's remarks regarding Cuba on 17 December 2014. Accessed on April 29, 2015 at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/17/statement-president-cuba-policy-changes>

H.R. McMaster would describe current U.S. strategic approach towards missile defense as “capabilities masquerading as strategy.”¹⁷⁵ Strategic approaches for missile defense must fully address the disease of rogue nations and not just the ballistic missile symptoms. The United States will one day live under the protective blanket of a fully operational ballistic missile shield, but in the interim the United States should consider complementing strategic approaches.

Diplomatic. In the short term, the United States should expand current negotiations with Iran to include limitations on ballistic missile development. The U.S. should also initiate similar bilateral negotiations with North Korea to limit both nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles. A balanced approach offering persuasive diplomacy and economic inducements while maintaining a credible coercive element could work to convince these rogue nations the benefits of abandoning ICBM ambitions far outweighs the benefits of keeping them. While the U.S. must take the lead on these diplomatic efforts, the United States alone cannot affect meaningful and lasting change without multilateral support of the international community.

For a long term solution international organizations such as the U.N., must take the lead to re-design international treaties that in today’s strategic environment have become irrelevant. The Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, and Nuclear Proliferation Treaty are a few examples of potential instruments that after updating could sustain positive behaviors in recovering rogue nations or prevent others from going rogue. A diplomatic undertaking of this scale is an international effort but a U.S. push within the UN to rethink international treaties would signal to the world that the U.S. is moving beyond kinetic solutions to its anti-ballistic missile strategy.

Information. The United States should learn from Israel’s skillful incorporation of the information instrument

¹⁷⁵ LTG McMaster used the phrase “capabilities masquerading as strategy” during a recent address to an NDU audience and often uses similar expressions in essays and statements to describe what he deems as “fallacies” of U.S. strategy.

within their strategic approach to ballistic missile defense. Robust civil defense measures required by Israeli law serve as their last line of defense from ballistic missile attack. The 1951 Israeli civil defense law requires all occupied buildings to have accessible hardened shelters and large civil defense system rehearsals are common.¹⁷⁶ Israel's civil defense proved successful at mitigating the effects of rocket attacks during recent fighting and exemplifies how national preparedness can serve as a deterrent for potential adversaries.

Many would view a United States reboot of civil defense infrastructure as a return to 1950s Cold War era methodology. But, in addition to protecting citizenry from the effects of a limited ballistic missile attack, a renewed emphasis on civil defense would produce several positive second order effects. This approach would give most American citizens something they've lacked since the end of the Cold War, skin in the game. Large scale civil defense drills would serve to stir up the passion of the American people and generate a national consciousness on the threats posed by rogue nations. Additionally, preparedness for a limited ballistic missile attack would translate to increased survivability for what many argue is a more likely threat, natural disaster. Most importantly it would signal to rogue actors that the United States is a hard target and the effects of a limited ballistic missile attack would be minimized.

Economic. Some suggest targeted economic sanctions against Iran over the past decade prompted recent U.S. bilateral negotiations. The United States should take this proven approach a step further and apply targeted economic sanctions as part of missile defense strategy. The intelligence community should identify those key materials or technologies that rogue nations must import to perfect nuclear weapon and ICBM programs. Even if these items can be used for peaceful purposes, the U.S. and international community must enact harsh economic sanctions on any nation that provides required ICBM materials or technology to rogue nations.

¹⁷⁶ Israel Home Front Command, "Bomb Shelters," IHFC, 2015, accessed February 16, 2015, <http://www.oref.org.il/10625-en/Pakar.aspx>.

In other words, the U.S. must identify the rogue nations “ball bearings” and cut off the supply. Just as the similarly focused allied bombing campaign against Nazi Germany failed to end the war, these targeted economic sanctions will not completely stop rogue nation ballistic missile programs. It will make gaining the resources to perfect their ICBM program extremely difficult and slow their development. A balanced strategic approach applying diplomatic, economic, and information instruments will either compel rogue nations to abandon their ICBM programs or buy time for the U.S. to perfect its National Missile Defense system.

Consequences and Conclusion

Nuclear equipped ballistic missiles in the hands of a rogue nation strikes fear not only in the citizenry of the U.S. but across the world. During the United States 70 year history of missile defense there is a positive trend of bipartisan agreement for pursuing a means to address the ballistic missile threat. Likewise, the international community almost universally condemns the proliferation of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles in the hands of non-reliable actors. This presents an unprecedented opportunity for the United States to take lead and implement new strategic approaches beyond the military instrument to address this common threat.

Yet implementing a strategy beyond a kinetic solution contains risks. The suggested approaches within this analysis are feasible, suitable, and sustainable in that they address the broader national interest with a manageable cost. But, many opponents would find diplomatic, economic, or information based approaches to missile defense unacceptable and undesirable. These approaches towards rogue nations are inconsistent with U.S. views that have driven foreign policy for the past several decades. Balanced approaches rely heavily on the assumption that even a rogue nation can be compelled to reason. This runs contrary to the conservative realist view which asserts that actors such as Kim Jung Un or the Ayatollah are incapable of good or rational behavior.

For this reason a broadened approach to U.S. missile defense would be a tough sell to policy makers and citizens. The United States is currently witnessing a similar debate play

out as the Obama administration implements new foreign policy approaches towards Cuba and Iran. Many believe that maintaining a position of strength through overwhelming military capability in order to deter rogue nations until their inevitable collapse is the most acceptable approach. It is generally agreed that this approach worked well to help achieve a U.S. Cold War victory by outpacing the Soviets militarily until they could no longer sustain the cost. Unfortunately, the Iranians and the North Koreans are not the Soviets. Despite being outmatched in every measurable aspect militarily and under the yoke of tough international sanctions, both of these rogue nations continue to advance their nuclear ICBM programs. As President Obama remarked, it is time for a “new approach.”

Conclusion. Missile defense is a required means within the U.S. National Security Strategy to address the limited ballistic missile threat posed by rogue nations, but missile defense strategy lacks an appropriate balance of approaches. 70 years of U.S. missile defense has relied solely on military capability as a deterrent or defensive measure. Despite enormous technological successes, these efforts remain a complex endeavor that is essentially hitting a bullet with another bullet. The United States should move “beyond the gunpowder” and address not only the ballistic missile symptom but more importantly the disease of rogue nations.

A balanced missile defense strategic approach should incorporate all instruments of national power. The United States must use diplomacy to change rogue nation behavior, launch domestic information campaigns to prepare the U.S. populace, and apply targeted economic sanctions to limit rogue nation’s acquisition of critical ICBM components. In the best case, this balanced approach will compel Iran and North Korea to abandon their ambitions to develop long range nuclear equipped ballistic missiles. Even if only partially successful, a balanced approach buys the U.S. military industrial complex the time it needs to perfect a National Missile Defense system the American people deserve and require by law.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

“The society that separates its scholars from its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting by fools.”

– Thucydides, History of the Peloponnesian War (ca 410 BCE)

On a hot, steamy June day in 2015 we graduated on the banks of the Potomac from the National War College. A few days later the family was headed towards Redstone Arsenal in Alabama for my required Joint assignment to the Missile Defense Agency. Although MDA’s headquarters is at Fort Belvoir, Virginia near our nation’s capital, the center of gravity for the agency (also known as the “mothership”) is in the Von Braun Complex on Redstone Arsenal.

There are roughly 8000 employees at the Missile Defense Agency worldwide, the minority of which (well under 1000) are military. There are a respectable number of government civilians generally at the higher end of the civilian pay scale to include several civilian Senior Executive Services (SES) leaders who manage the organization. But it is an army of civilian contractors who really carry the water at MDA and make it run as efficiently as it does. When people ask if MDA is a research and development or an operations and maintenance organization, the answer usually comes back “yes”; MDA does both missions very well.

Not only does MDA work with industry to develop and field the latest in missile defense sensor, command and control as well as interceptor technology, it also plays a key role in the operations and maintenance of critical forward deployed missile defense systems. This includes the ground based mid-course interceptor which protects the US homeland from limited ballistic missile attack. Additionally, MDA is integral for the regionally deployed Army THAAD weapon system, the globally deployed Navy Aegis BMD weapon system as well as

a whole slew of missile defense sensors scattered literally around and above the globe. MDA's responsibilities as both an acquisition and operations entity makes it unique as an agency within the Department of Defense and resultantly gives the agency special acquisition authorities specific to its mission.

I arrived to MDA in July of 2015 shortly after my 20th anniversary in the military. Less than a month later I learned of my selection for promotion to the rank of Colonel. Words can't describe the feelings of pride and thankfulness to have served with outstanding Americans that took this awkward country boy and molded him into a strategic leader. There was also a twinge of uncertainty as the lyrics of Credence Clearwater Revival's "Fortunate Son" kept playing through my head. I never imagined I would make it this far in the military. I always thought I would be lucky just to serve until retirement at twenty years and I still couldn't envision myself as a Brigade commander or power broker Colonel within a Joint or Army staff.

Lucky for me it takes over a year from time of selection to pin on the Colonel rank! I had nearly 14 months to think about the future as I served as a Division Chief at MDA within the Warfighter Operational Support Directorate. Our mission was to serve as the agency's interface with the Geographic Combatant Commands to ensure the seamless deployment, operations and development of future requirements for missile defense systems. Additionally, our portfolio included providing missile defense computer simulation support for warfighter wargames and exercises across the globe. Our job was to ensure such news worthy events as the deployment of Aegis ashore sites in Eastern Europe and THAAD to the Korean peninsula went off successfully.

This was strategic leadership at its finest! I didn't really control, produce, or command anything, but the impact of my shaping actions as a senior executive staff officer, could have lasting impacts for better or worse on the strategic posture of the U.S. and key allies. Although completely different from anything I had ever experienced, I thoroughly enjoyed the assignment. I've always enjoyed learning and serving with mostly civilians in a unique DoD agency with a very important

mission was in some ways like being a Second Lieutenant again- every day was something new. As you may recall, prior to this assignment, I had never served above the operational level! I was very fortunate when I pinned on Colonel to “fleet up” to my boss’s position as the Director of MDA’s Warfighter Operational Support directorate where I remained for the next three years.

It was also about this time I had to make a crucial decision, whether to compete for O6 level (Brigade) command. Brigade commanders are directly responsible for over 3000 Soldiers and Brigade sized units often undertake missions of operational or strategic importance. Successful O6 level command is a requirement to proceed in the military to the flag level and is generally the last command opportunity in an officer’s career. Brigade commanders who perform well while in command are competitive to make the extremely tough cut to serve within our nation’s general officer ranks.

Our Soldiers, Sailors, Airman and Marines deserve O6 level commanders who are 110% committed to them and to the unit’s mission regardless of what the officer’s ultimate motivations may be. It was for this reason I elected not to compete during my three command selection board opportunities. My family and I didn’t feel we could give the commitment our Soldiers deserve. Although my nature is mild mannered by most accounts, you don’t get to be a Colonel by not being super competitive. Choosing to withdraw from a selection board for the first time in my career stung and was one of the toughest decisions I ever had to make. But it was the correct one; my family and I were in a good place, the kids were enjoying their schools, I enjoyed my job, and for the first time we actually felt like a “normal” American family (whatever that means).

This also “showed my hand” so to speak to Army leadership about future career aspirations. Although an O6 can serve to 30 years in several challenging staff positions, this just didn’t appeal to me anymore. Bouncing around every couple of years in yet another interesting but ultimately “staff weenie” strategic leadership position just wasn’t my bag. Additionally, my mindset (along with most officers) has always been when

it's time to go, quickly step out of the way and make room for an up and comer. Almost three years to the day after pinning on Colonel I retired from the Army I loved and transitioned back to civilian life.

Which brings us here! Most will tell you the endearing part of service is the people, plain and simple. Leaders, peers and subordinates, "lead" each other towards a common goal most of the time while enduring common hardships. This is what makes our military so great. It was a bumpy ride at times to be sure, but seeing disparate people from literally every walk of life come together to achieve will always be my fondest memory of military service and I daresay is seldom replicated in the civilian world. I am enjoying working as a civilian again but do often have to remind myself (and come to peace with the fact) I probably won't have another career as personally or professionally rewarding as serving our nation.

As I reflect to try and make sense of it all while transitioning my military leadership skillset for use back in the civilian world, I am realizing many of the leadership principles taught to us within military Professional Military Education hold true as a civilian albeit in a much flatter, less hierarchical organizational structure. We need outstanding direct leaders in the civilian world, doing the day to day personal interaction with workers in order to accomplish assigned tasks, ensuring production quotas are met or services are provided on time and to standard. Organizational leaders in the civilian world sometimes come in the form of "functional" managers who develop the human resource, budgetary, business, and other operational policies or procedures for a particular company much like the Army's "Iron Majors".

Directors within the company help shape the policies and provide direct leadership to their managers, bridging the gap between the task oriented, direct level of leadership within an organization and the senior executives in a very similar fashion as our Army battalion commanders. Vice presidents and general managers are the Brigade commanders and flag officers of the civilian corporate world. They provide the strategic direction for organizational and direct leaders within their companies then ensure they are properly resourced to

accomplish the company strategic goals. The similarities are uncanny!

I am very confident however, the similarities stop there. Direct, organizational and strategic leaders in our civilian world do not receive the same amount of focused leader development training as our military leaders and rightfully so. As we opened with, our nation's military stands apart from others in this world, not only because of an enormous technological advantage but also in the emphasis it places on growing leaders. Our military pours a tremendous amount of national treasure towards leader development annually and as we've already identified our service members work under an "up or out" system completely unlike civilian counterparts.

Those who serve in the military must learn and grow as leaders to remain in service. Just in my own military journey, I spent four of my 24 years of service in academic environments learning "how to think"! I would estimate I've cranked out well over 200 pages of academic assignments in either Professional Military Education or military funded civilian schooling not to mention hundreds of hours of reading and classwork. Another important point that I've stressed throughout this book is that the military's leader education process moves very quickly. The writings included in this book were completed in just a decade but reflect military leadership training from the direct to strategic levels. This begs the question, is the military's approach to leader development working?

This question is often debated by think tank "experts" on leadership. The military's leader development and Professional Military Education often comes under fire by these experts as insufficient for today's full spectrum operations. Can't imagine what nation they believe has a better military education system? If they read this book would they feel the same way? Probably more than ever, but that's ok. I know it's not perfect but I also know the impact PME had on my military career and how the system developed me personally.

There are numerous means by which one could measure the effectiveness of military leader development. One overly simple way would be to observe the results of U.S. military operations over a set period of time. I think most would agree,

the American military is very successful in handling some of the world's most complex problems a majority of the time. However, a more scientific and pointed approach could be to reexamine the numerous academic requirements from Professional Military Education and Advanced Civil Schooling from a representative sample of military leaders at pre designated points within their career. One's own words tend to hold pretty good insight to the inner self. Do the writings display the characteristics of direct, organizational and strategic leader our military desires and deserves?

Of course this is the methodology applied in this book, albeit from only one military service and within that service, a sample size of one. Hardly enough to make any sweeping conclusions about the effectiveness of military leader development. You will have to take my word for it that these works are representative of a standard "M1A1" officer's journey through Professional Military Education. I believe the writings we've just explored clearly indicate a leader that successfully developed from direct leadership to organizational leadership and finally comfortably operated as a strategic level leader thanks to an imperfect but highly effective military leader development process.

At each level we explored, I attempted to provide a glimpse into where I was personally as an officer and how I responded to my developmental journey at that particular point. I will now go back a bit further and offer even more context as evidence that, at least in this officer's journey, professional military education worked.

Before being ambushed by an Army ROTC recruiter during my freshman year at state university, I really had no background about the military and certainly very little knowledge on leadership. While some of my extended family were drafted into service and fought in WWII, Korea and Vietnam, I had no immediate family members who served in the military. I participated in a few extracurricular activities in high school but never competed in team sports. As I began my undergraduate experience, my physical fitness, bearing and presence was severely lacking. Worse yet, I really didn't have any direction or purpose in life. Simply put, to look at my 18

year old self, one might quickly conclude I was not leader material!

Thankfully, my college had an outstanding ROTC program with cadre (many fresh from Operation Desert Storm) who truly cared about leader development and didn't give up on me when I struggled. They set the foundation for my future in the military and set me off on a journey to develop mentally and physically as a leader. I am eternally thankful for my experience at Middle Tennessee State University's, "Blue Raider" ROTC Battalion. Without their direction and developmental experience, I am not sure where I would be now.

Another insight I would like to share is a little harder to articulate. Unbeknownst to me as a college student but upon reflection, I believe I was pre-disposed to respond to military education and the military lifestyle in general. Like just about every young person, I pushed rules to the limit, but in general, complied with instruction or corrected myself when deficient. With this prevailing mindset, I learned quickly that to set yourself apart quickly in the Army, one needed only to meet the well documented standards for a particular task every time, all the time. Carrying this ideology over to leader philosophy, one of my mantras during command was to "meet the standard in everything you do". Whether it was crew certifications, maintenance checks, discipline, marksmanship, physical fitness, medical readiness etc. If everyone meets the Army standard then the unit will collectively rise to the top.

This sounds like a recipe for mediocrity, but worked very well! The majority of our Soldiers met the standard every time, all the time and our unit was very prepared to perform our war time mission. As I alluded to earlier, most officers and soldiers I've served with who weren't successful in the military, were unable to maintain published standards somewhere- discipline, physical fitness, training or even medical.

I believe the qualities of the "unlikely leader" and "conformist" are exactly those military service and professional military education is designed to impact the most. It is for this reason, I believe PME was profoundly effective on my leader development; at least, this is how I rationalize my successful military journey! Early in my career, I held

misperceptions about what it takes to be a successful officer that perhaps many not familiar with the military may also hold. One being, an officer should be well connected, financially secure and in some ways, pre-ordained to succeed. I quickly learned this is the farthest thing from the truth. What makes our military great is the all-volunteer force remains a cross section of our society where anyone who is willing to put in the work can succeed.

Over the course of my twenty four year career I served with Americans from all walks of life, who volunteered to serve their nation for just as many diverse reasons. Yet the majority of these great Americans who rose through the ranks successfully were perhaps identified as “unlikely leaders” in their younger years and possibly dubbed “conformist”. At the end of the day, they were just hard working Americans with a passion for service and a dedication to the military profession. These are the “standard” American service members. I am so thankful our nation’s military has such a high standard!

If leaders are both born and made, this book attempted to provide a brief glimpse into the “made” part of the equation. The born part, perhaps the “conformist” and “unlikely leader” qualities (amongst several others), is an argument for another book. The academic portion of the “made” part of my leader development made up over four years of my military career and I couldn’t just close the chapter on my service without reflecting and writing about this sizeable part of my former professional life.

Did it make me a better leader? I think so. I did not understand the attributes of the direct, organizational and strategic leader until I learned the material and then was required to write volumes about the topic. Being self-aware is a very critical leader attribute and a requirement to be successful. It is certainly difficult to be self-aware if one cannot fathom the particular phase of leadership you are operating within! The hundred pages or so of academic writings we’ve just reviewed clearly depict a typical Army officer learning “how to think” and progressing through a military career.

I hope this book sparked a desire in readers curious about military leader development to learn more, there certainly is quite a bit of fodder in here to stimulate one's curiosity. Perhaps these pages proved useful to researchers or students of leadership. I would be very interested to learn about much more structured studies on the effectiveness of military academic requirements on leader development. Most importantly, I hope a junior leader, military or civilian is inspired to take a renewed interest in their leadership development. If they haven't already, hopefully they acknowledge the necessity to change approaches as they progress through the ranks. Hopefully these pages provided some useful and easily understandable examples of direct, organizational and strategic leader thinking.

For the very select few who may have found some of the actual writings themselves of interest, I've included a bibliography containing source material for the longer pieces if you'd like to explore the topics further. A few of the writings in this book were written in the "just get through this" mode but most were truly interesting assignments that caused me to think. A couple of these academic works I am very proud of, even if they didn't win any awards within the schools they were submitted!

It was my great honor to serve our nation for nearly a quarter of a century. Four years of learning "how to think" in academic environments were a big part of that service. I sleep well at night because I have witnessed firsthand and remain confident the United States military is the best equipped, trained and led fighting force in the world. There is so much more to our military than high tech planes, ships and tanks, our citizen soldiers are what sets us apart. The Professional Military Education and Advanced Civil Schooling that turns those citizen soldiers into the quintessential warrior-scholar is a tremendous part of our military strength.

It was very cathartic at the end of my military career to reflect and reminisce about these almost forgotten academic works! This book was a great capstone writing assignment to close the chapter on a remarkable journey from backwards country boy to well-trained strategic leader.

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