FEBRUARY
2010

Keeping The Edge:
Revitalizing America's Military Officer Corps

Edited by Dr. John A. Nagl and Brian M. Burton
Contributing Authors: Brian M. Burton; Dr. John A. Nagl;
Dr. Don M. Snider; Frank G. Hoffman; Captain Mark R. Hagerott, USN;
Colonel Roderick C. Zastrow, USAF

Center for a
New American
Security

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank our colleagues at the Center for a New American Security for all of their assistance and support during this process. Dr. Kristin Lord and Garrett Mitchell provided excellent organizational and editing recommendations during the writing process. Liz Fontaine was invaluable in translating the draft text into a high-quality final product. We benefited tremendously from the research support provided at all stages of the project by Joseph S. Nye, Jr. Research Intern, National Security Interns Nick Masellis, Seth Rosen, Maile Yeats and Iranga Kahangama.

This report is the outcome of consultation and cooperation with numerous military officers and other students of the military profession. We are very grateful for the generous support of the Smith Richardson Foundation, which made this project possible. We especially thank the contributors to this monograph, Captain Mark Hagerott, USN; Frank Hoffman; Dr. Don M. Snider; and Col. Rod Zastrow, USAF. We also greatly appreciate the participation of numerous others in our working groups, whose thoughtful discussion informed our recommendations. Finally, we acknowledge the helpful insights and comments on draft versions of this report provided by Col. Ross Brown, USA; Col. Joe Buche, USA; Commander Herb Carmen, USN; Lt. Col. Jeffery Goodes, USMC; Vice Admiral (ret.) Kevin Green, USN; Lt. Col. Kelly Martin, USAF; Tom Ricks; Rear Admiral James "Phil" Wisecup, USN; Dr. Leonard Wong; Lt. Col. Paul Yingling, USA; and others.

Cover Image

U.S. Army Col. Katherine Kasun brings her detail to attention before greeting President George Bush during his arrival at the Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport in Virginia February 2007. Kasun led a detail of nine active duty military personnel from US Joint Forces Command. Each member that was selected to greet the President has recently deployed to Operations Iraqi or Enduring Freedom. The President was in the area meeting with congressional Democrats in Williamsburg.

(STAFF SGT. JOE LAWS / USAF)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. military officer corps, the professional body entrusted with preparing and training the armed forces for war and peace, is at the forefront of an ever-increasing array of challenges. Indeed, America arguably relies on its armed forces to perform a wider variety of functions than any other nation in history. While the military cannot shoulder the entire burden of responding to complex international circumstances, it must prepare itself better for the inevitability of such challenges. Four trends in particular are likely to alter the range of skills and knowledge officers will need: the increased incidence of "wars amongst the people;" the likelihood of humanitarian and peacekeeping missions in parts of the world with which the United States has little experience; widespread access to highly destructive weapons; and the 24-hour global media environment.

To respond effectively to complex challenges, the U.S. military must develop and maintain a high degree of adaptability within the officer corps. Twenty-first-century military officers must learn and embody enduring principles of warfare and leadership, but the teaching and training of officers must also change to meet the contemporary demands and opportunities they are likely to face. In addition to demonstrating a high degree of proficiency in conventional warfare, officers must also develop a broader knowledge of politics, economics, and the use of information in modern warfare to cope with a more complicated and rapidly evolving international environment.

Emerging strategic trends and threats also highlight the importance of some new attributes and career development options. This will require rethinking the balance between the need for specialists and generalists at different ranks and the specific responsibilities and requirements of generals, field-grade officers, and company-grade officers. Service leadership must determine the

proper balance between deep expertise in one small subset of requirements of officership and the broader strategic perspective that is necessary for senior leadership of a branch or service.

RECONSIDERING TALENT DISTRIBUTION AND CAREER TRACKS

Complex operations demand military officers who possess a comprehensive understanding of the battle environment and the capacity to integrate capabilities to achieve mission success. They must understand the capabilities and mission of their unit or platform, as well as the role of forces from other services, allied military forces, civilian government agencies, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The solution, however, cannot be as simple as adding even more to the already-packed training and professional military education curriculum for junior and intermediate-grade leaders. Instead, the services should develop a balanced distribution of talents across required knowledge areas within segments of the services' officers through more differentiated career paths. There is substantial tension in officer training programs between cultivating excellence in tactical and technical competencies and developing the qualities needed for operating in complex environments in concert with multiple partners. A more holistic officer development program is required to counteract a disproportionate focus on tactical training over strategic education. Strategy and warfighting are integrative tasks, requiring not only the ability to operate specialized equipment or to command a tactical unit, but also an understanding of how different pieces fit together to ensure the achievement of national objectives.

ALLOWING ADDITIONAL CAREER FLEXIBILITY

Encouraging the accession and retention of more of the best available talent into the officer corps will require offering more diverse and flexible career paths that encourage risk-taking and unconventional assignments. Current officer career paths were built for a very different military than the one we have today. The difficulty of maintaining a healthy family life amid reassignments and deployments is now a commonly cited reason for talented young officers who decide to leave the force. These cultural changes affect military careers more than any other American profession; an officer assignment system that ignores the fact of increased marriage rates and working spouses will force officers to choose between career and family, and both will lose. Increased use of sabbatical years — particularly to pursue higher education or gain additional experience in an unconventional assignment while also allowing "downtime" from deployments for families — would provide additional career flexibility for future generations of officers. Better recognition and employment of these outside experiences and talents could allow the military to attract or retain some of the most innovative and dynamic talent in today's workplace.

ENHANCING OFFICER EDUCATION

A lifelong Professional Military Education (PME) system would allow the military services to design adaptable programs that balance necessary warfighting skills with a broader exploration of similarly pertinent topics to include language and cultural studies. The program should not be designed to produce experts in non-military subjects but instead be geared toward better equipping officers to understand the political and cultural complexities that will affect their activities. While the current system of professional military education focuses on the tactical level of warfare and on junior officers, an increased focus on cultivating the most talented strategists relatively early in their careers would be beneficial. Most importantly, the PME system should be redesigned with reference to the education of general and flag officers, the senior leaders of the institution and those most responsible for strategic and enterprise leadership. It is essential that the most senior officers be engaged in a progressive series of educational

experiences — and that performance in those institutions of higher learning be factored into promotion and slating decisions.

INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EARLIER JOINT, INTERAGENCY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MULTINATIONAL (JIIM) EXPERIENCE

Because future conflicts are likely to involve operations with other services, agencies, and allied forces, experience in Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) assignments is essential to familiarizing officers with the various actors who will play an important role in future conflicts. It will also enhance an understanding of how those capabilities can be leveraged to accomplish U.S. national objectives. The officer corps would benefit if JIIM tours were available earlier in careers, enabling more junior leaders to take earlier advantage of these experiences during their formative years. An expansion of exchange programs with other militaries, particularly non-Western forces, would be beneficial because American officers will often operate with local forces in future conflicts.

CULTIVATING LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

The process of building relationships of trust with foreign forces and civilian populations, often critical to achieving successful outcomes in operations in foreign countries, would be greatly aided by an expansion of foreign linguistic and cultural knowledge within the officer corps. Such capabilities have generally been relegated to relatively small special operations, civil affairs, or foreign area officer contingents. It is unrealistic to educate every officer to some useful standard in every foreign language he or she may need in the course of a career, but the advantages of having a broader base of linguistic and cultural awareness in the corps, particularly among junior leaders in the field, should not be dismissed. Both language training and cultural education take time, and should start early and be reemphasized throughout an officer's career. One solution is to increase the institutional demand for these skills by expanding officer billets, such as the Army's Foreign Area Officer specialty, that require these capabilities and ensuring that these billets present clear and ample promotion paths to positions of command or staff responsibility. Another option is to require linguistic and cultural training for prospective officers before their careers begin. ROTC and military academies can add language and cultural education requirements early on, or at least provide additional incentives for completing such programs.

ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The ability to compete in the "battle of the narrative" in public domains is an essential task for which more officers will need to be educated and trained in strategic communications, understanding that their role in this endeavor may be as important to the success or failure of American policy as is their skill with executing combined arms operations against the enemy. Additional media training during the course of pre-deployment preparation that simulates the stresses of actual operations should continue and be offered to commanders and executive officers during pre-deployment training. Tactical level leaders will have the most current knowledge about their operations and will be best suited to respond to developing situations that can shape the narrative. They should be authorized to speak about their operations and U.S. objectives in "lay language," and in place of central headquarters public affairs officers who are often far removed from theaters of action.

PROMOTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT SKILLS

Ultimately, the most important factor in ensuring that the profession of arms is able to meet the demands of national security in this century will be the people selected to lead the services. Currently, promotion instructions favor some skill sets that are relatively less useful than they were during the Cold War, while neglecting to reward those of greatest importance in the emerging security

environment. Tactical excellence often determines who gets promoted, but this results in tacticians being promoted to positions of strategic leadership for which they are often poorly suited by temperament, ability, or training and education. Future selection boards will need clear instructions to properly assess those holistic attributes in candidates for promotion that will be most valuable for anticipated future conflicts, and they should be chaired by officers cognizant of their responsibility to shape the future force to prepare for and meet those demands. Moreover, guidance and oversight for vital selections to the three- and four-star rank, made without promotion board input by service chiefs, must be closely examined.

The profession of officership will continue to require physical, moral, and mental excellence, but the rapidly changing strategic environment of the 21st century will place an increasing premium on agility and flexibility. The emerging strategic environment will provide both challenges and opportunities to those who have the tools necessary to handle the unexpected, and to do so with honor and integrity.

CHAPTER I:
THE FUTURE OF THE U.S. MILITARY OFFICER CORPS: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

By Brian M. Burton and Dr. John A. Nagl

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THE FUTURE OF THE U.S. MILITARY OFFICER CORPS: STRATEGIC CONTEXT

By Brian M. Burton and Dr. John A. Nagl

America's military is being taxed by sustained combat requirements in Afghanistan and Iraq, which present the greatest challenges to its durability since the Vietnam era. These wars, combined with the United States' global commitments, have stretched the force over a prolonged period and compelled rapid and unexpected adaptations. The U.S. military did not anticipate engaging in large-scale armed nation-building missions in two countries comprising some 50 million people. But when the planned offensives to decapitate the Taliban and Saddam Hussein's regime ended, American forces were thrust into a wholly different role for which they were not prepared. The arc of the United States' experience in Afghanistan and Iraq is in many ways the story of how American forces adapted under fire to these unfamiliar situations.

These current conflicts have put a spotlight on the military's expanding role in American foreign policy, demonstrating how the United States relies on its armed forces to perform a wider variety of functions than any other nation in history. The U.S. military operates some of the most sophisticated technologies in the world, from microchips to nuclear reactors. It maintains a worldwide presence, divvying up the globe into regional commands whose commanders play the role of *de facto* ambassadors. It is often the first-responder on the frontlines of U.S. foreign policy initiatives ranging from providing humanitarian assistance in Haiti, countering narcotics in Colombia, building partner capacity in Africa, peacekeeping in the Balkans, countering terrorism in the Philippines, and ensuring regional security in Japan and South Korea.[1] Ideally, diplomacy and development are America's tools of choice for many such crises. However, these civilian assets have not been sufficiently developed or resourced to succeed in these contingencies.[2] While the military cannot shoulder the entire burden for responding to complex international circumstances, it must better organize

In a strategic environment in which a broad array of security threats to the United States are expected to emerge and America's civilian capacity remains limited, the military will have to continue to adapt to new circumstances and perform an even wider variety of challenging tasks.

and prepare itself for the inevitability of such challenges. In a strategic environment in which a broad array of security threats to the United States are expected to emerge and America's civilian capacity remains limited, the military will have to continue to adapt to new circumstances and perform an even wider variety of challenging tasks.

Confronting this reality is the U.S. military officer corps, the professional body entrusted with preparing and training the armed forces for war and peace, and a national resource critical to the maintenance of American national security and influence around the world. The officer corps is not simply another bureaucracy or political constituency, but a major executing arm of American foreign policy. For these reasons, the nation invests significant time and funding to train, educate, and develop its officers, but whether this has kept pace with the salient changes in strategic and domestic environments, and in the character of 21st century conflicts is the central question this series of papers aims to investigate.

A New Strategic Environment

There is an emerging consensus within the U.S. foreign and security policy establishment that an array of political, economic, social, demographic, technological, and environmental trends will profoundly change the global strategic environment.[3] These broad global trends, from environmental factors like climate change to demographic factors, like greater urbanization to technological factors like the increased proliferation of advanced weapons, will manifest themselves in the form of new operational challenges and constraints imposed on the employment of American power, particularly military power, abroad. The U.S. military has dominated the conventional battlefield with its superior capabilities since Operation Desert Storm in 1991, but adversaries have managed to circumvent this strength by adopting both high- and low-end asymmetric tactics and methods. Insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, cannot match the U.S. military in direct combat, so they avoid its strengths by hiding among civilian populations and conducting targeted ambushes specifically designed to undermine U.S. political objectives and will. China remains far behind the United States in terms of conventional capabilities, but increasingly is developing high-end asymmetric capabilities intended to neutralize U.S. advantages, notably in the areas of anti-access missiles, anti-satellite weapons, and cyber warfare.[4]

While the United States is unlikely to face a true existential threat in the foreseeable future akin to the Soviet Union and its thousands of nuclear weapons, the wide distribution and asymmetric nature of new threats makes it harder to focus attention and resources. Meanwhile, there are important domestic trends that put further pressure on military officers. These trends combine to create a far more complicated conflict environment that future military officers will have to be prepared to confront — and corresponding new challenges for the officer profession. As retired U.S. Army Lieutenant General David Barno remarked

before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, "Officer leadership in this era faces demands that may make the relative intricacy of soldiering during the Cold War simple in comparison."[5]

TRENDS IN THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

The strategic environment has always been subject to change, but in recent years the rate of change has increased dramatically, putting new pressures on military officers and providing a new premium on the ability to adapt to change as a key component of officership in this century. Four trends in particular are likely to alter the range of skills and knowledge they will need to address them: the increased incidence of what Rupert Smith calls "wars amongst the people;" the increased likelihood of humanitarian and peacekeeping missions in parts of the world with which the United States has little experience; the widespread access to highly destructive weapons; and the 24-hour global media environment. All further complicate the already difficult tasks of military officership.

Demographic and environmental pressures will put increasing strains on existing governance institutions tasked with maintaining order. Rapid urbanization and youth population bulges in the developing world will challenge already-fragile economic and social infrastructures which lack the resources and infrastructure to accommodate the influx of young, jobless migrants. Future combat is increasingly likely to occur within or in close proximity to these densely populated areas, requiring special military consideration. As the National Intelligence Council describes, "Explosive urbanization will … increase the likelihood of clashes between [class, ethnic, or religious] groups … As these communities coalesce and become 'self-governing' or sometimes co-opted by organized crime groups, state and local government will face 'no-go' areas in many large cities as has already happened in cities like Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro."[6]

Even widely-agreed upon scientific projections of the likely effects of climate change — to say nothing of worse scenarios — indicate that in many places these conditions will be further aggravated by sea level rise, drought, famine, heat waves, floods and other natural disasters. In some regions, this could result in increases in humanitarian and refugee crises, or combine with other drivers to ignite or exacerbate conflict. No country will be completely immune to the effects of climate change. However, as the United States has far and away the greatest assets and capabilities for responding to disasters and crises, the nation's leaders will likely face increasing demand to respond to these contingencies, many of which may arise in areas of the world where the U.S. military has little experience.[7]

Meanwhile, existing and prospective American foes continue to arm themselves with more dangerous capabilities. This proliferation of armaments will continue to be a major contributor to global insecurity. WMD proliferation among hostile states, and the possibility of their transfer to non-state actors is a very real concern, most notably in the cases of Iran and North Korea today. Improved communications and transportation capabilities have made fissile nuclear material, and the technical expertise necessary for weapon construction, increasingly accessible.[8] The NIC predicts that without serious advances in counter-proliferation efforts, by 2025 "the diffusion of technologies and scientific knowledge will place some of the world's most dangerous capabilities within reach" of non-state groups.[9] The knowledge and materials necessary to produce chemical or biological weapons are now available to individuals and sub-state organizations: Witness the Aum Shinrikyo cult's 1995 sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway or the 2001 anthrax letter attacks in the United States. These attacks were relatively unsophisticated and failed to produce mass casualties, but revealed the widespread disruption and panic

that even a minor attack could cause. There is a real and growing possibility that a future chemical or biological attack launched by a more capable group or individual could cause far greater damage. Commanders will need to be prepared to adapt to a wide range of increasingly lethal threats launched by a broad array of hostile forces, from state actors to small groups. U.S. military forces will have to be prepared to respond rapidly to WMD incidents launched against them or civilian populations by mitigating the immediate damage caused by such attacks and maintaining order and discipline in their wake.

The proliferation of more advanced conventional weapons has rendered what were once called "low-intensity conflicts" more lethal. The 2006 war between Israel and the Hezbollah militia in Lebanon spurred increasing concern that non-state actors now have military capabilities thought previously to be the exclusive domain of state actors.[10] Hezbollah's use of rockets, anti-ship missiles, anti-tank guided missiles, and unmanned aerial vehicles made it a more formidable foe than the Israelis were prepared to face.[11] Hezbollah's employment of advanced technology in combination with guerrilla tactics — most notably its efforts to conceal itself amongst the civilian population — offer a harbinger of a future in which non-state actors will no longer be at such a distinct disadvantage in weaponry and technology. This is a particularly troubling prospect given the difficulties U.S. forces have encountered in dealing with relatively lightly equipped insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan. This trend toward "hybrid wars" will render governments around the world, especially the less wealthy and less well-established ones, increasingly vulnerable to losing their sovereign monopoly on violence to militia and insurgent groups, contributing to further sub-state instability.[12]

Ongoing weapons proliferation trends increase the array of options available to U.S. foes. Both state and non-state enemies will seek to circumvent American conventional military prowess by gaining a broad array of asymmetric capabilities, forcing American forces to fight on terms in which traditional specializations and divisions of labor will be challenged, much as they have been in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Commanders at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels will have to be able to react quickly to enemies who will adapt and constantly probe weaknesses with an increased level of lethal sophistication.

All of these challenges occur amidst the unforgiving scrutiny of the constant global media cycle. The ubiquity of media and information technology is changing the way wars are waged. The "battle of the narrative," in which enemies attempt to undermine the legitimacy of U.S. and allied actions among the local population and global public opinion, is already a major component of insurgent and terrorist strategy around the world. The Afghan Taliban, for example, runs a sophisticated propaganda apparatus that emphasizes the civilian casualties resulting from NATO operations, as well as the corruption of the U.S.-backed Afghan government.[13] The inevitable media coverage surrounding incidents of abuse or excessive force, such as those at Abu Ghraib and Haditha in Iraq, can severely damage the credibility of American forces in the field and infuse the acts of even an individual soldier with global strategic significance, if they are captured and rebroadcast around the world.

Even operations that are justified under the laws of war and rules of engagement can be harmful if they cause death and destruction that is seen as unwarranted, thus contributing to the enemy's narrative that American forces are brutal and dismissive of the loss of civilian life. As the Joint Forces Command noted:

> Joint force commanders already wrestle with how to deal with a pervasive media presence, widespread blogging, almost instantaneous posting of videos from the battlefield, e-mail,

and soldiers who can call home whenever they return to base. In the future they will be confronted with a profusion of new media linked to unimaginably fast transmission capabilities … Winning the [media] battle has always been important, but in the pervasive and instantaneous communications environment expected in future decades, it will be absolutely crucial. For commanders not to recognize that fact could result in the risking of the lives of young Americans to no purpose.[14]

The ability to counter the enemy narrative will depend in large part on the ability of military officers, particularly those operating in the field, to understand how acts could be perceived or recast by others. They must have the requisite communication and media skills to promote the U.S. narrative and to engage effectively with host-nation populations and the global media.

DOMESTIC FACTORS

Perhaps less examined but just as important is the fact that the maintenance of American military power faces significant challenges at home. First, the increased fiscal pressures resulting from the combination of rising entitlement costs and a weakened U.S. economy will require trade-offs between personnel and procurement in defense budget debates. Burgeoning health care costs could have the effect of "squeezing out" other defense investments over time.[15] Military health care costs make up about almost one-tenth of the fiscal year 2010 defense budget (47 billion dollars) and are expected to double every decade.[16] This dynamic will likely create substantial pressures within the Defense Department to curtail or even roll back end-strength increases and other personnel-related expenditures in the name of preserving technological advantages, which in turn would affect the ability of the military to develop and maintain the broadest possible array of knowledge, education, and experience within the officer corps.

Another challenge is the ability to recruit and retain sufficient high-quality personnel for the officer corps.

A final troubling trend can be found on the supply side of the equation, with current research suggesting that up to 75 percent of Americans aged 17 to 24 are ineligible to enlist, let alone receive an officer's commission, due to a combination of obesity, poor education, drug use and criminal records.

The military has always had to contend with the "pull factor" of its best officers being drawn away by better-compensated private sector opportunities. That problem is compounded today by the "push factor" of a high operational tempo, particularly among the ground forces, that shows no signs of abating. The prospect of frequent deployments forces many of the junior and field-grade officers to choose between their military careers and their family lives; many capable officers reluctantly choose to leave the service.[17] The potential for a bleed-out of competent leaders may be mitigated by the current U.S. economic climate, but the "pull-push" dynamic is a systemic challenge for an all-volunteer military, and particularly its highly-educated and skilled officers, in a period of protracted combat deployments.

A final troubling trend can be found on the supply side of the equation, with current research suggesting that up to 75 percent of Americans aged 17 to 24 are ineligible to enlist, let alone receive

an officer's commission, due to a combination of obesity, poor education, drug use and criminal records.[18] Maintaining high physical, mental, and moral standards for officer recruits is particularly crucial in wartime and has become increasingly difficult.[19] Such troubling statistics point to the importance of proper management and cultivation of America's officer corps.

Perspectives on the Future of Officership

To respond effectively to these complex international and domestic challenges, the U.S. military must develop and maintain a high degree of adaptability within the officer corps. Twenty-first-century military officers must learn and embody enduring principles of warfare and leadership, but the teaching and training of officers must change to meet the contemporary demands and opportunities they are likely to face. In addition to demonstrating a high degree of proficiency in conventional state-on-state warfare, officers must also develop a broader skill set in politics, economics, and the use of information in modern warfare to cope with a more complicated and rapidly evolving international environment. Determining the proper balance between conventional competencies and emerging requirements — and the best means to train and educate a corps of adaptive leaders — remains a contentious issue with no obvious consensus solution.

This study is based on a series of working group meetings and collaborations with military officers and outside experts to gain a variety of perspectives on the nature of officership in a new strategic environment. This introduction is followed by edited versions of four papers and a concluding chapter on revitalizing America's officer corps. The chapters provide an analysis of these issues from several informed perspectives, while the concluding chapter provides both a summary and a series of suggestions to help America keep its edge in military officership. Each author approaches future officer development in a different way, but all arrive at similar, though not identical, conclusions regarding the importance of providing a broader range of educational and professional experiences — essential components of training agile minds how to think rather than what to think — and cultivating new skill sets that are more relevant to the contemporary strategic environment. Each of the authors is writing as an individual and their views in no way represent the views of the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, or any other department or agency.

Dr. Don M. Snider, an expert on military professionalism at the U.S. Army War College, emphasizes the importance of cultivating the officer corps as an expert profession which requires the possession of specialized knowledge on the use of military force. Thus, personnel policy, training, and education must preserve core professional competencies, but also develop a progressively deeper understanding of war and strategy.

Frank Hoffman establishes a framework for how to think about the requirements for officership in a rapidly changing threat environment marked by "complex irregular warfare" or "hybrid war." He identifies six primary "leadership lines of operation" that must be pursued in order to reach a "full-spectrum profession" of military officership: professional rigor, operational focus, ethical sensitivity, situational intelligence, orientation to national rather than parochial needs, and continuous learning. This framework is useful in highlighting an overall strategy to achieve the goal of an officer corps that can adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining core competencies.

Mark Hagerott, a U.S. Navy Captain, formerly of the U.S. Naval Academy, argues that the global strategic environment will require more officers who have the ability to work across services and government agencies, domestically and

internationally. Hagerott's focus is on the Navy, but his model for rebalancing the distribution of technical-tactical and strategic-integrative functions in the officer corps has broader applicability. He argues that the Navy has focused since the beginning of the Cold War on developing officers as technical experts limited to their specific platforms. He lays out a new framework for thinking about the portfolio of capabilities needed for the officer corps, and recommends rebalancing it by cultivating a new contingent of officers who have more early education and experience in Joint, Interagency, and Multinational operations.

Roderick Zastrow, a U.S. Air Force Colonel, presents an Air Force perspective concerning the development of senior strategic leaders. He argues that effective strategic leaders must be cultivated through more rigorous officer education and joint assignment processes to develop broader perspectives regarding the use of force to achieve national objectives. And he posits that success should not be defined simply as achievement in a single service, but rather the attainment of broader strategic competencies that permit fuller coordination across the services and agencies.

In the volume's conclusion, the editors recommend steps to develop the current and probable future requirements for skilled, adaptive leaders of character that America's armed forces will need to meet the demands of the 21st century.

The U.S. military officer corps faces profound challenges. Addressing them will require vision, imagination and energy over a sustained period of time. The issues raised in these papers are intended to mark the beginning of a conversation about those challenges and opportunities, recognizing that effective reform is an evolutionary and progressive process.

ENDNOTES

[1] For examinations of the increasingly expansive scope of the U.S. military's role in global affairs, see Dana Priest, *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003); Robert D. Kaplan, *Imperial Grunts: The American Military on the Ground* (New York: Random House, 2005) and *Hog Pilots, Blue Water Grunts: The American Military in the Air, at Sea, and on the Ground* (New York: Random House, 2007).

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[3] For example, note the congruity in the assessments and posture statements produced by the National Intelligence Council, Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Army, the Navy, U.S. Joint Forces Command. See National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* (November 2008), http://www.dni.gov/nic/PDF_2025/2025_Global_Trends_Final_Report.pdf; Department of Defense, "National Defense Strategy," June 2008: 2-5, http://www.defenselink.mil/news/2008%20national%20defense%20strategy.pdf; Department of the Army, "2009 Army Posture Statement," (May 2009): 1-3, http://www.army.mil/aps/09/2009_army_posture_statement.pdf; Department of the Navy, United States Marine Corps and United States Coast Guard, "A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower," (October 2007): 5-7, http://www.navy.mil/maritime/MaritimeStrategy.pdf; U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), "The JOE: Joint Operating Environment 2008: Challenges and Implications for the Future Force" (November 2008), http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2008/JOE2008.pdf.

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[5] LTG (Retired) David Barno, "Testimony before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations" (10 September 2009).

[6] National Intelligence Council (NIC), *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* (November 2008): 86.

[7] *Ibid.* 51-57.

[8] Office of the Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism, U.S. State Department, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008* (Washington, DC: 30 April 2009).

[9] NIC, *Global Trends 2025: A Transformed World* (November 2008): iv.

[10] Greg Jaffe, "Short '06 Lebanon War Stokes Pentagon Debate," *Washington Post* (6 April 2009).

[11] See Andrew Exum, "Hezbollah at War: A Military Assessment," *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, Policy Brief #63 (December 2006).

[12] See Frank Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: the Rise of Hybrid Wars* (Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, December 2007); Frank Hoffman, "Janus Thinking for Hybrid Wars: Defining Today's Multifaceted Conflicts," *Armed Forces Journal* (October 2009): 14-18.

[13] See International Crisis Group, "Winning the War of Words? Taliban Propaganda in Afghanistan," Asia Report No. 158 (24 July 2008).

[14] Joint Forces Command, "The JOE 2008," 40.

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CHAPTER II:
DEVELOPING A CORPS OF PROFESSIONALS

By Dr. Don M. Snider

Keeping The Edge:
Revitalizing America's Military Officer Corps

DEVELOPING A CORPS OF PROFESSIONALS

By Dr. Don M. Snider

War is quintessentially a human endeavor. The value of other resources, such as applied technology, strategic reach, and logistics should never be underestimated. But neither should consideration of those ever take primacy over the focus on human capital as the key resource of effective, information-age militaries.[1]

The transition period between the Bush and Obama administrations occasioned a spate of studies on how to reform the U.S. defense establishment. The general thrust was to recognize that in an era of persistent conflict, new and permanent demands have been placed on the commissioned leadership of our services; thus there is a need to determine how best to adapt officer development to meet the challenges of this changed environment. However, in the understandable urgency to find a consensus on what future officers must be able to do, it is imperative that we not lose sight of the need for officers who know what it means to be a military professional and how to lead in an evolving military profession.

In terms of organizational structure and culture, each of the armed services is a mixture of three forms of producing organizations found within American society: bureaucracy, business, and profession. Two of these forms, bureaucracy and profession, are constantly in tension within each service culture. At any point in time, which of these two cultures is most influential on the effectiveness of the service is largely determined by the decisions of the previous strategic leaders of that service. These decisions establish the knowledge, associated identity, and developmental processes by which the human capital of the officer corps in each service is acquired, developed, and used. Today's leaders must recognize that there is an unremitting difference between the capabilities of a vocational profession and that of government

bureaucracy. To effectively fight future conflicts, America needs a military of expert professionals who set a new standard of professionalism for tomorrow's officers.

In the era of the all-volunteer military it becomes particularly important to encourage officers to become committed to personally directed, life-long learning.

THE ARMED SERVICES AS PROFESSIONS

Professions are organizations wherein the individual has the discretion to exercise initiative and judgment in decision-making and execution that flows from their specialized knowledge, a knowledge typically not shared by the clients those professionals serve.[2] The professional decides what to do, how to do it and leads in the execution by virtue of mastery of the profession's knowledge. The client grants the profession significant autonomy to conduct the expert work because over time the profession has done the work effectively and has not exploited the client in its institutional self-interest.

American military professions are, then, self-forming, self-regulating, and self-initiating in the provision of expert work, living on the life-blood of relationships they establish and maintain with: (1) their client, the American people, (2) the civilian leadership elected and appointed over them, and (3) the junior professionals developing within the institution who will later become the senior stewards who keep the institution a profession into the future.

EXPERT KNOWLEDGE OF MILITARY PROFESSIONS AND THE IDENTITY OF OFFICERS

The officer corps' claim to professionalism rests on acceptance of their expert knowledge — their corpus of doctrines — as legitimate and effective. It also depends on the ability of the services to cultivate strong shared identities to develop the military professionals in their ranks. These identities are closely associated with the expert knowledge of the profession.[3] While officers are developed by three means — education, training, and service in operational assignments — most of this is self-driven development regardless of the environment within which it occurs.[4] In the era of the all-volunteer military it becomes particularly important to encourage officers to become committed to personally directed, life-long learning, and to ascertain that the military establishment is committed to supporting them in those endeavors.

Priorities for officer development must change. In the past, junior officers focused early in their career on the military-technical aspects of their service, broadening later on into other fields of knowledge, including the political-cultural aspects of the profession. Now, given the nature of hybrid warfare, that is insufficient — junior officers must be more knowledgeable about all areas of their service's expert knowledge, and must develop broad professional identities from the outset. Future officer development systems, using all three modes of development, must adapt to this necessity.

THE EXPERT WORK OF A MILITARY PROFESSIONAL

The work of a military professional is "the repetitive exercise of discretionary judgment."[5] Picture an officer, even a junior grade officer, serving in Iraq or Afghanistan, and consider the frequency with which he or she will face new, unfamiliar situations, which require a time-sensitive diagnosis or an action. Officers may well perform this "professional practice" many times daily, often with many lives at risk, dependent upon the accuracy and timeliness of their discretionary judgments. As a consequence, the

desired outcome of officer development is the ability to exercise discretionary professional judgments based on expert knowledge adequate to the rank and position in which they are employed.[6]

In turn, this means that officers must assume responsibility for constant inquiry into the applicability of knowledge to practice, called "reflection-in-action."[7] Without such a disposition among the officer corps, the tendency will be for reification of conventional wisdom, which breeds a "the way things get done around here" mentality — the antithesis of professional practice and a particularly inappropriate response in a time of rapid strategic change.

Where to Focus for Future Officer Development: Six Recommendations

In order to facilitate the development of a cohesive culture of professionalism in America's officer corps, the collective principal stakeholders must address several key questions:

- Is the prevailing officer personnel management system supportive of a culture of professionalism? Are there appropriate and sufficient incentives and opportunities for continuing professional education and training?
- Is behavior shaped more by a self-policing ethic among professionals versus bureaucratic incentives applied centrally?
- Is professional knowledge keeping pace with best practices in officer training and development? And vice versa?
- Does each service have a clear picture of and substantive profile for assessing officer performance and suitability for promotion? Are the officers accessed, assessed, developed and certified at each professional level with clear focus on their ability to exercise sound discretionary judgments and then relate those experiences to the profession's body of knowledge via "reflection-in-action?" Does each service have the correct identity for future officer development?

To create officer personal management systems for future military professionals, America's armed services should:

1. Streamline the process of integrating officers from the various service organizations by creating a new lateral entry program — a joint military profession responsible for staffing core positions within the Joint Commands, task forces, and agencies.[8] Twenty-four years after passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, these entities are still formed by "pick-up teams" of officers assigned for roughly two-and-a-half years before returning to their service. By creating a new cadre of field-grade officers from each service who enter the joint service profession laterally and remain in it for the duration of their career, the integrative capability of America's military forces and its institutional knowledge would be greatly enhanced. This would also require the establishment of a Joint Personnel Command to assess, assign, promote, and develop career joint professionals.

2. Extend all commissioned careers, pending successful certification, to thirty-six years with an option for forty years, a practice which mirrors private sector and NGO policies, and which would keep highly qualified officers in service while they are still fully capable of being strong leaders and important sources of knowledge.

3. Establish rigorous procedures for accession, development, and advancement of officers within each service. Two metrics should have priority: the repeated assessment of an officer's aptitudes for discretionary decision-making at successive levels of authority and responsibility, and rigorous individual certification of practice in the field prior to advancement.[9] Certifications are the premier form of self-policing within a profession, ensuring the successful linkage of expert knowledge to practice.

4. Re-establish emphasis on a broad liberal arts education as the pre-commissioning foundation for officer development, regardless of source of commission. In the information age, the role of a baccalaureate education has changed remarkably. In the industrial age such a degree was the requisite preparation for entry into the white collar workforces of government, management, and entrepreneurship. Today, however, given the explosion of knowledge, success in those roles is better facilitated by the individual's first graduate degree. Thus, recognizing that all officers will have graduate degrees, the professions should encourage a broader liberal undergraduate education grounding the future officer in the ideals, institutions, and people he or she will defend.

5. Mandate that in the careers of all officers, roughly two of the first dozen years or so must be served outside the boundaries of the military profession in which they are commissioned. The developmental benefit is obvious: civilian graduate school, foreign immersion, and business experiences are the only opportunity in the overcommitted life of current officers for the essential reflection and contextualization that contributes so richly to a broadly gauged officer capable of sound discretionary judgments.

6. Refocus officer development on individual moral agency and judgment.[10] The nature of hybrid warfare places an even greater emphasis on the moral component of leadership, as manifested in discretionary judgments that must be made quickly and sometimes without higher-level guidance. This is an important developmental challenge because for the past decade the services have not chosen to emphasize the moral equation, with the Army stating that such is the "responsibility of the individual."[11]

Taken together, these recommendations are intended to increase the effectiveness and professionalism of our armed forces by explicitly focusing on the concept of a new joint military profession, and on concrete steps to enhance the quality of officer training and development.

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CHAPTER III:
EMBRACING A FULL SPECTRUM PROFESSION

By Frank G. Hoffman

Given the dramatic changes in the form and the origins of the threats that now confront the United States, the intellectual challenges of the profession of arms will be even greater than in the past.[1]

EMBRACING A FULL SPECTRUM PROFESSION

By Frank G. Hoffman

The dynamic and ambiguous environment of modern warfare places both new and enduring demands on today's military professional. In addition to his or her traditional competencies, today's officer must be prepared for a broad array of tasks not normally considered core missions. The officer must remain historically and morally grounded in the professional application of violence on behalf of society. He or she must rapidly and cognitively adapt to this new environment and master both new competencies and contexts. Officers must also remain the definitive moral force within their commands, establishing and enforcing the moral compass for their subordinates.

Further complicating the task of preparing for the future is the increasingly complicated nature of the operational environment. The most likely operational environment will be more densely populated and urbanized. Operating in these dense urban communities will pose extraordinary challenges. As challenging as the physical aspect of operations in this environment will be, the human terrain will be even more difficult to navigate. Officers must possess the ability to comprehend and effectively maneuver in the cognitive and cultural dimension of the modern battlespace.

Our nation's global interests, the international community's need for stability, and the range of missions that must be fulfilled create many demands on the profession of arms, and particularly its officers. Our forces must be highly trained and educated to function in both current and emerging operational environments

The nation requires the most capable force, covering the greatest range of tasks, at an affordable cost that can minimize the risks inherent in an unforeseeable future.

against adaptable and evolving foes. The nation requires the most capable force, covering the greatest range of tasks, at an affordable cost that can minimize the risks inherent in an unforeseeable future. They must be innovative thinkers, possessing a wider variety of skills and an unprecedented breadth of knowledge. The profession must be disciplined enough in its grasp of the various domains of security to recognize that weather, terrain, and the enemy still "get a vote" in operations.

Professional Framework: Leadership Lines of Operations (LLOs)

This paper summarizes significant shifts in the military profession and the need to develop new competencies required to conduct successful operations in the emerging strategic environment.[2]

The officer corps needs to reassess and reformulate its identity, ethic and sense of purpose, as well as expand its professional domain. This approach identifies six Leadership Lines of Operations (LLOs in military terminology) as reflected in Figure 1. It suggests that America's officer corps must be:

PROFESSIONALLY RIGOROUS

During the past several decades, the U.S. military has developed an unequaled expertise in conventional warfare, codified in a comprehensive body of doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures. While U.S. forces have improved dramatically in their ability to conduct irregular warfare, irregular foes will continue to pose significant challenges for the foreseeable future. U.S forces will require the same level of expertise in irregular warfare that they have developed for conventional warfare. The officer corps must embrace the reality of the full spectrum of warfare, and not merely devote its considerable talents to a preferred operating mode. It must become a full service profession for the full spectrum of conflict possibilities and enemies.[3]

The professional orientation of the U.S. military will have to adapt to and accept an orientation that seeks to employ military capabilities within a political, social and economic context — a method of operation compatible with the comprehensive or "whole of government" approach that is essential to effectively counter irregular threats.[4]

A component of this LLO is the recognition that the military profession will engage with other disciplines and professions. Leaders must be able to work with members of other services, government agencies, and NGOs, as well as with military and civilian personnel from partner countries. They must be able to effectively interact with host nation civilians who may have limited reason to trust in their goodwill, and to win the contest of narratives and imagery in the minds of adversaries and target populations.[5]

OPERATIONALLY FOCUSED AND COMPETENT

The Capstone Concept for Joint Operations contains another important implication: That the armed services develop senior leaders who are experts in commanding at the operational level, at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to achieve

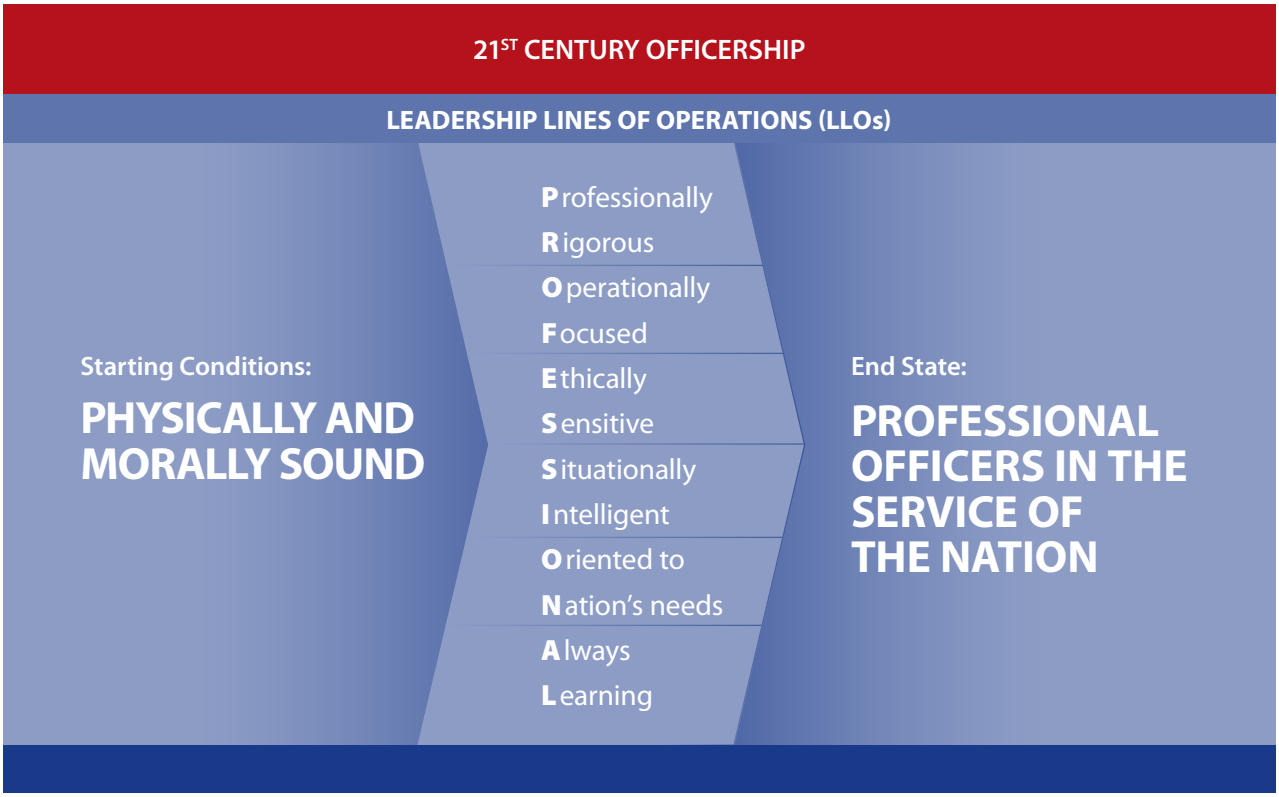
strategic objectives within theaters or other operational areas.[6] Given the growing complexity of operating environments, these commands will become more challenging, requiring the integration of diverse military capabilities as well as the coordination of these capabilities with those of interagency and international partners.

These officers must be expert in arranging and balancing combat, security, engagement, and relief and reconstruction activities, and must create a command climate that inspires cooperation and trust. Additionally, they must seek out opportunities for synergy in the relationships among the components of the joint force and with interagency and international partners.

ETHICALLY SENSITIVE AND MORALLY BEYOND REPROACH

Our nation holds its servicemembers to a high moral and ethical standard. The American people expect ethical conduct from military professionals because of shared Constitutional values, standards set by national and international laws, and the military's oaths of fealty and service. Because the nature of conflict presents constant moral challenges with the added burden of life and death implications, leaders must maintain an ethical climate in their units. This is a particular challenge in irregular warfare, where troops are often obligated to choose the riskier course of action in order to minimize harm to noncombatants.[7] Central to this charge is the warrior ethos, which distinguishes the honorable warrior from the mere fighter or criminal.

Figure 1



Military leaders provide a visible example of ethical standards, translating cherished values into esteemed military virtues by their actions and decisions, and by creating operating procedures that serve as controls against violations. The values of the nation and the profession are not negotiable: Violations are not mistakes, they are failures in the fundamentals of the profession.

SITUATIONALLY INTELLIGENT AND CULTURALLY AWARE

Today's operational context demands a markedly improved set of language and cultural capabilities and capacities. Greater language and cultural proficiency is predicated upon the need for close interaction with foreign governments, international organizations, and indigenous forces. Similarly, increased emphasis on security, engagement, and relief and reconstruction activities implies extensive interaction with indigenous agencies and populations. In certain ways, the future will be defined less by technology and more by culture-centric warfare where knowledge gained through the humanities and social sciences will be of great importance.[8]

ORIENTED ON THE NATION'S NEEDS

Civilian control of the military is the hallmark of democratic societies, and military professionals operate with that knowledge and commitment.

U.S. military culture should hold fast to the Marshall ideal by fulfilling its obligation to provide professional advice, but not to engage in policy debates beyond its legitimate role.

Recent scholarship suggests that some officers do not share this perspective. In one survey, nearly 35 percent of military officers agreed with the statement that, "Members of the military should be allowed to publicly express their political views just like any other citizen." Nearly 65 percent believed strongly or somewhat strongly with the statement that, "It is proper for the military to advocate publicly the military policies it believes are in the best interest of the United States."[9] Some officers believe that military advisors should go beyond advising and seek advocacy roles, inside and outside the official policy channels, on matters of military force including rules of engagement, political and military goals, what kinds and numbers of units are employed, and determining an exit strategy.[10]

U.S. military culture should hold fast to the Marshall ideal by fulfilling its obligation to provide professional advice, but not to engage in policy debates beyond its legitimate role. Advocacy by military officials weakens the profession by creating the perception of self-interest vis-à-vis the national interest. When the officer corps forgets this or loses sight of its proper role and the underlying ethic, it unwittingly cedes its legitimate authority and precious credibility.

ALWAYS LEARNING

In a recent document issued by the Joint Forces Command about the future operating environment, this observation was made:

> The ability to innovate in peacetime and adapt during wars requires institutional and individual agility. This agility is the product of rigorous education, appropriate applications of technology and a rich understanding of the social and political context in which military operations are conducted. But above all, innovation and adaptation require imagination and the ability to ask the right questions.[11]

However, American officers do not have a particularly rich history of embracing a rigorous study of history or identifying enduring themes of human interaction in conflict. Even within the military, the focus on technology often trumps consideration of the human dimension of conflict. Far too often we have envisioned the conduct of future conflict without consideration for a thinking adversary whose culture and national mindset are often the most important considerations in developing strategy — a fatal flaw in modern modes of irregular warfare.

The current operating environment imposes new demands on leaders that require careful attention to individual and unit adaptability, factors enhanced through mental simulation and formal education, which create the cognitive accumulation of long-term experiences.

Officership in Context: Persistent Irregular Warfare

Leadership in persistent irregular warfare is particularly demanding, owing to the presence of an active insurgency amongst a host population. The existence of an active insurgency implies a very fragile government or the breakdown of civic order. It also implies a social system that cannot adequately meet the needs of its populace. The environmental conditions officers face include numerous leadership, political-military and situational ambiguities, as well as the traditional moral challenges posed by the threat or use of lethal means. It also includes greater interaction with foreign populations, and more decentralized (and less supervised) activities. These conditions can be corrosive to some military discipline and ethical decision making. Positive action must be taken to counter these effects before frustration leads some to forget the principles for which they are fighting.[12]

Typically, counterinsurgency operations require highly decentralized leadership, with small unit leaders operating within the intent of but without direct supervision from a physically remote commander. This places a premium on effective small unit leadership because these units are often the point of contact between U.S. forces and the local population. As result, they must exercise interpersonal skills that enable them to organize varied entities which are not under their authority. Predictably these operations sometimes encounter unexpected violence, which requires deviating from rules governing security operations to those of traditional combat. Leaders who find themselves engaged in ruthless combat, on complex terrain, and against enemies who melt back into the population must demonstrate significant mental and emotional flexibility and physical stamina to maintain focus on desired outcomes. In these sudden transitions from static defensive posture or routine patrols to intense bursts of combat, the capability to preserve unit cohesiveness is at a premium.

There are enormous pressures to do otherwise and to take the most expedient actions, but this is where officers must maintain the ethical climate of their units and prevent subordinates from giving in to emotions. Constant reminders that expedient acts are too often short-term solutions that generate greater harm over the long haul are critical, and the most effective commanders are those who can show great empathy for their troops while being stern enforcers of ethical guidelines and rules of engagement.

Operational adaptation is today's imperative.[13] Irregular opponents test for seams in institutional paradigms and mental models, and will exploit any lapses or gaps. These non-traditional conflicts are tests of will and competitions in learning and agility. If there is one institutional and individual advantage to be sought over future opponents, it is winning the learning and adaptation competition inherent to irregular wars.

Implications

From initial screening through senior professional military education, from Officer Candidate School through senior leader development, the U.S. military must continue to build thinking, decisive, innovative officers. They must be imbued with initiative and empowered to act within the construct of commander's intent and in the face of potentially chaotic situations. Currently, however, the U.S. military does not have the supporting personnel management systems to create and retain this level of professionalism: "If we expect to develop and sustain a military that operates at a higher level of strategic and operational understanding, then the time has come to address the recruiting, education, training, and promotion systems so that they are consistent with the intellectual requirements for the future joint force."[14] Our training and education programs must accurately reflect the situations, environments and peoples that Service members will face and interact with.

New and complex operational environments create an imperative for more effective junior officers who must be properly trained to make the right decisions in ambiguous and demanding situations where failure to act properly can have far-reaching strategic consequences. These officers must be prepared for complex conditions, and must have the tactical acumen to develop and assess these conditions.

The highly diverse range of situations anticipated for joint forces will put a premium on leaders who can respond quickly and flexibly to the unexpected, regardless of operational requirements. Leaders at every level must become comfortable with ambiguity, capable of acting on their own authority, and have an appreciation for the broader implications of their actions.

The military's longstanding rhetorical commitment to mission command must incorporate commitments to information-sharing through all ranks, granting discretion to subordinates, and encouraging a culture more tolerant of errors of commission than errors of omission. Services should recruit men and women who show promise in these attributes, and reward leaders who acquire and demonstrate these skills. And professional military education (PME) must provide high quality training and education that facilitates flexible and creative problem solving.

On the increasingly decentralized and lethal battlefields that characterize irregular conflict, leaders cannot be developed in a single two- to three-year operational tour. Rather, services should extend initial tours for those who demonstrate the greatest potential to serve in small unit leadership roles and ensure that incentives are provided to these combat leaders to return to service in operational billets in subsequent tours. This will require tailoring our training programs, courses, and exercises to develop cohesive units led by officers capable of critical reasoning and ethical decision making. Personnel assignment, training, and education policies must support the imperative of creating and sustaining these leaders.[15]

This will also require a significant investment in education, which should increasingly come from outside the formal PME system. The benefits of civilian graduate school are of relatively greater importance in this environment. As General Petraeus has argued, today's officers would greatly benefit from getting beyond their comfort zones and out of the professional cloister in graduate school:

> [G]raduate school inevitably helps U.S. military officers improve their critical thinking skills. This is, of course, not just a result of specific courses designed to develop research and analytical abilities. Students learn not only from books and professors; they also learn from each other. That is also why the intellectual development of our officers is best facilitated by graduate

programs that do not have too many members of the military in them. Officers should be repeatedly challenged, and they must develop their own intellectual arguments and positions.[16]

Conclusion

The military professional of the 21st century is challenged by complex operating environments, the intelligence of adaptive enemies, and the convergence of threats, contexts and capabilities. The United States must improve its knowledge of and capabilities for waging irregular warfare because it is likely to be a major mode of warfare for the foreseeable future. And in order to accomplish that objective, the officer corps must improve its competencies to plan and execute security, engagement, relief and reconstruction activities in dynamic circumstances — the full spectrum of military operations — as central imperatives for the 21st-century military.

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CHAPTER IV:
REBALANCING THE NAVAL OFFICER CORPS

By Captain Mark R. Hagerott, USN

Keeping The Edge:
Revitalizing America's Military Officer Corps

REBALANCING THE NAVAL OFFICER CORPS

Captain Mark R. Hagerott, USN

At the dawn of the second decade of the 21st century, the challenges for national security have become more complex. New threats and missions have emerged, and new geographical regions have ascended in importance. Yet traditional forms of warfare persist. To effectively face these threat categories, the naval officer corps must broaden the range of skills and knowledge among its members. At the same time, there is a persistent need to ensure an integrated unity of effort across this increasingly divergent spectrum of operations. And that places a premium on a call for officers who can facilitate greater intra-service, inter-service, interagency, and international cooperation.[1]

In response to this evolving environment, the Navy has upgraded its educational and personnel systems, although the responsiveness of officer development training has been uneven. While highly specialized single platform training is consistently first rate, the training of linguists, foreign area experts, and cyber operations specialists is moving slowly. Additionally, the supply of officers who can integrate and cooperate across organizational boundaries is not keeping pace with demand. What is impeding the development of an officer corps responsive to the new demands of today's security environment?

Impediments to Change

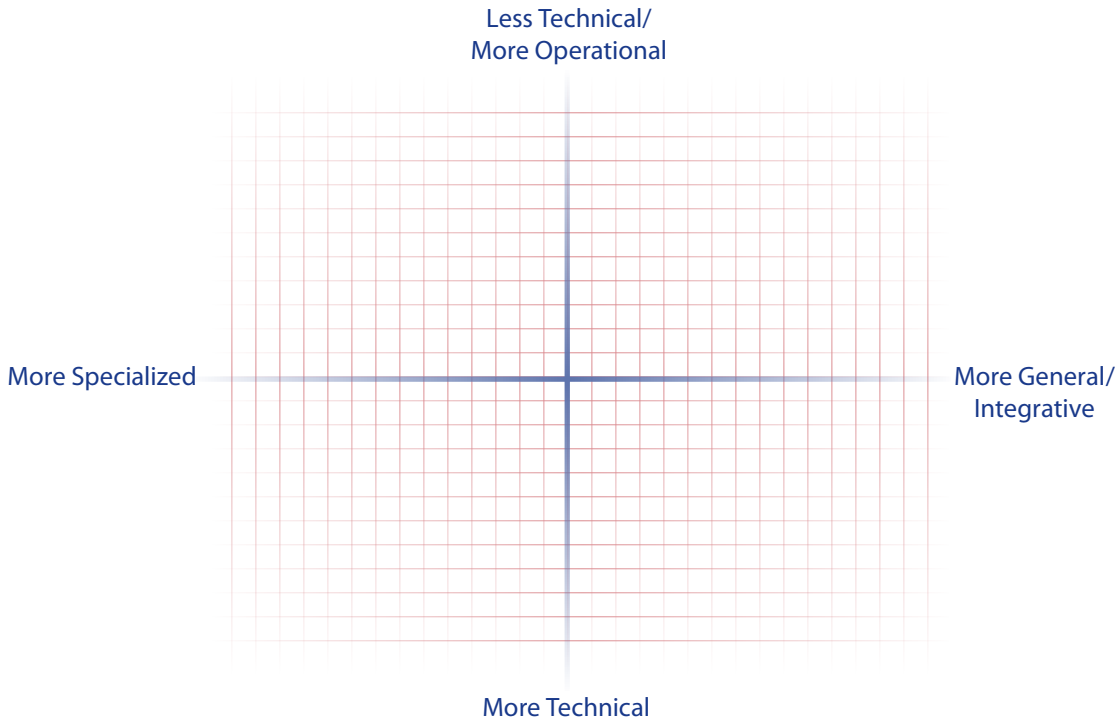
During the past several generations, platform and technology have defined the identity of the "line" naval officer and informed his values and norms.[2] This technical-machine platform bias is deeply imbedded in the naval officer development system, and was intended to be a source of innovation rather than a protector of the status quo.

However, the platform-technology bias produced two unintended consequences. First, officer performance and allegiance conformed to the norms and interests of a specific platform technology subculture — submarine, surface, and

aviation — thereby inhibiting integration across warfare communities. Second, the technical-platform bias was of such a magnitude that it stymied efforts to create a cadre of line officers highly qualified in non-technical, yet nonetheless important areas of operational expertise. Lastly, the platform focus has inhibited officers from migrating to new fields of technology that might cut across and help integrate the platform communities. Taken together, the cumulative effect has been to favor specialized platform knowledge over important competing demands and thereby imbalance the officer corps.

One way to depict the tradeoffs between the need for specialized technical knowledge and the equally urgent need for integrative operational knowledge is shown in Figures 1 and 2. Officer knowledge and skill sets required by complex organizations can be grouped in four categories corresponding to four quadrants: the specialized operator, the specialized technical officer, the integrative operator, and the technical integrator. Before attempting to address today's challenges, it is important to understand how the naval officer model evolved from a position of balance to the imbalanced one of today.

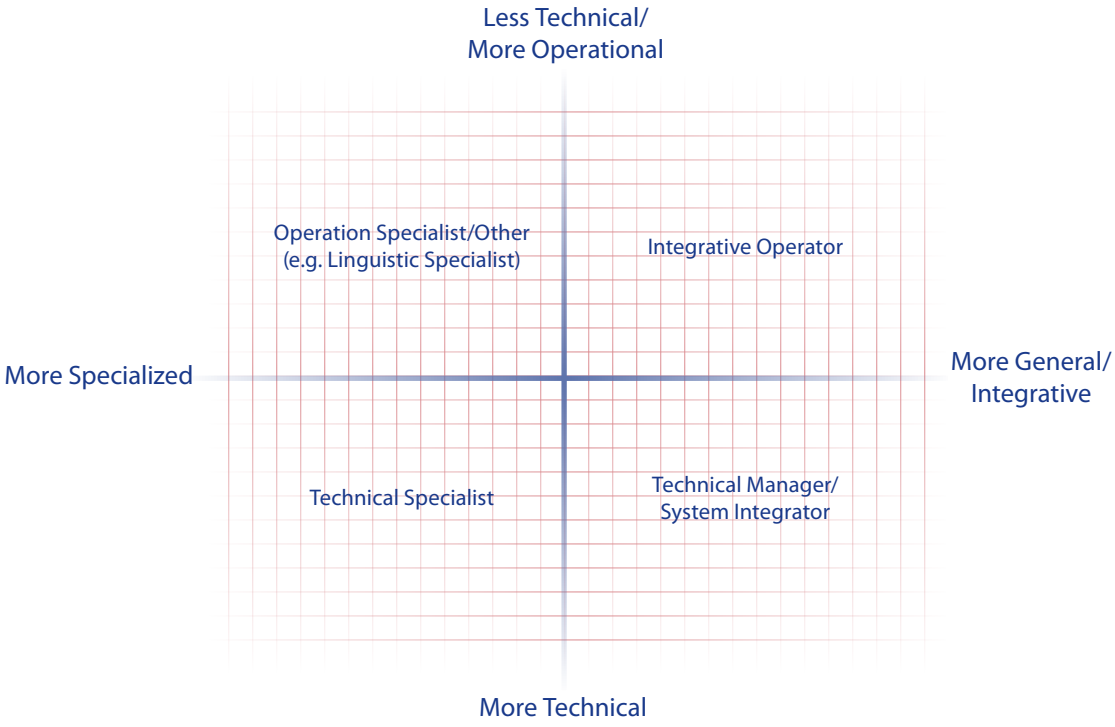
Figure 1: Naval Officer Knowledge Requirements
Knowledge Areas by Quadrants



Depiction of naval officer knowledge requirements by quadrants. A large operational organization built upon complex technologies needed to produce officers in each quadrant.

Source: © OTIS Quad Model

Figure 2: Naval Officer Knowledge Requirements
Knowledge Areas by Quadrants



Naval officer knowledge holders identified by familiar labels: "Operation Specialist," or "Technical Specialist." Until the 1970s the Navy used the term 'Generalist' to identify officers in the upper right quadrant, but this term fell into disfavor. A more accurate label is suggested: Integrative Operator, as shown.

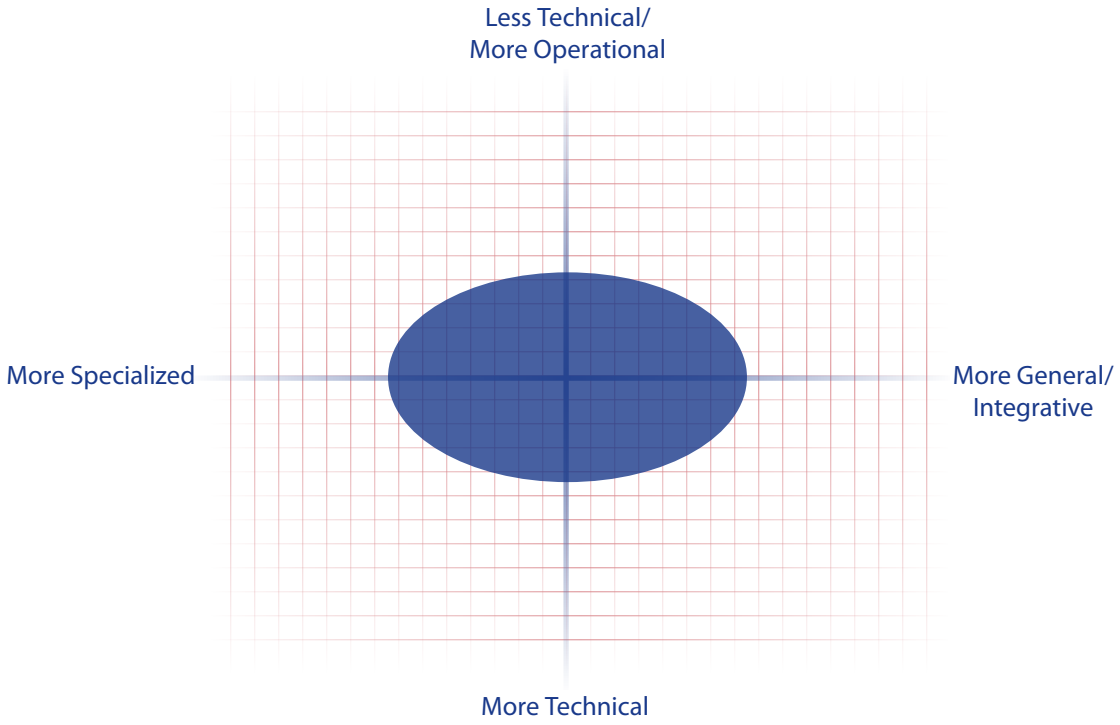
Source: © OTIS Quad Model

Today's Naval Professional Balance: A Legacy of the Cold War

The Navy has long struggled to balance competing demands on the officer corps. Since the days of steam, the Navy has needed officers with specialized technical knowledge to build and maintain complex high-tech platforms. At the same time, the Navy required officers who had both specialized and integrated operational knowledge. As the service took on global responsibilities, the officer corps achieved a rough balance across the quadrants. After the Second World War, in recognition of the complex, global, and inter-service nature of combat, the Navy acknowledged the need for broader joint education and training.

For the next two decades, Navy career policy and practices produced an officer corps that balanced the technical and non-technical, the specialized and integrated. For example, midshipmen at the undergraduate level received a broad, general education that included language training. Language and cultural education were important throughout a career, and officers were encouraged to study international relations.[3] The value placed on war college and joint education became manifest in promotion practices; those educated at war colleges came to make up the vast majority of officers who rose to senior flag rank.[4] At the same time, the Navy produced a remarkable group of technical

Figure 3: Naval Officer Corps in Balance: 1945 – 1968



The naval officer corps achieved a remarkable balance as it adapted to the requirements of three dimensional warfare and global joint operational responsibilities.

Source: © OTIS Quad Model

innovators who developed radio, digital data links, and the first ships of a nuclear powered fleet.

By the 1960s, however, it proved increasingly difficult to maintain a balanced officer corps that was experienced at sea, technically adept, and operationally integrated and "joint." The complexity of specialized machine platforms increased while the number of technical specialist staff officers declined. The Navy turned to 'general line officers' to fill billets previously held by technical specialist staff officers, requiring the 'generalists' to learn a 'technical subspecialty'.

Navy leaders soon acknowledged that it was unrealistic for 'line' officers to master a technical subspecialty, build operational expertise on a platform at sea, and acquire integrated joint knowledge. Therefore, the service effectively abandoned efforts to enhance joint knowledge, and focused instead on 'line' officers with single platform experiences and shore-based technical subspecialties.[5] This shift in priorities to a technical and platform-centric model resulted in the officer corps imbalance, as shown in Figure 4.

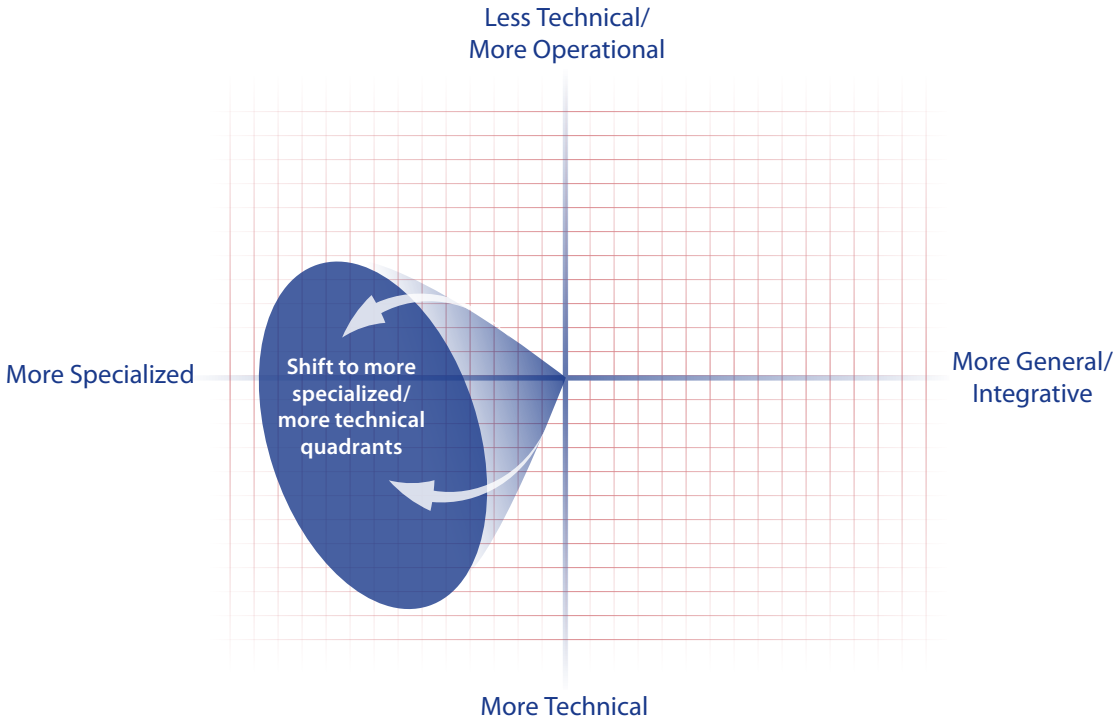
The Navy's decision to de-emphasize joint education and integrative training may have been advisable in the short run, especially in light of the arms race with the Soviet Union. High-tech platforms operated alone for much of this period, and the need for integration and cooperation were

less than at any time in the previous half century. But senior officers recognized that this shift would be temporary, so the service made a commitment to rebalance the officer corps once the crisis had passed.[6] However, because the Cold War persisted for two more decades, the technical platform-specialized line officer model became the norm.

At the conclusion of the Cold War, the national security environment began to demand more joint and cultural knowledge, while officer career paths remained technical and platform-specialized, with little time for language education, war college, or joint training.[7] On the technical side, the line communities remained so focused on platforms that few officers could take assignments in the emerging fields of electronic and information warfare without risk to their careers.

The evolution of the Naval Academy curriculum illustrates the institutional "lock-in" phenomenon of Cold War momentum. Prior to 1968, the Naval Academy graduated officers who earned a general, undesignated degree in naval science, which included universal language education for all midshipmen. In 1973, the academy's core curriculum shifted, becoming a technically rigorous program in response to the unique conditions of the Cold War,

Figure 4: Specialized Platform Programs Unbalance Officer Corps



The unique, and sustained requirements of the Cold War, which placed a premium on highly specialized-technical officers, eventually unbalanced the unrestricted line officer corps. Not only did cultural-language and joint proficiencies suffer, but if line officers were assigned to duty on integrative technologies that were not closely aligned with the platform (e.g., communications), their promotion prospects were reduced.

Source: © OTIS Quad Model

and the building of a nuclear powered fleet. The Naval Academy academic dean used the nuclear power factor to justify the new emphasis on technical subjects: "With the increased dependency on nuclear power plant systems, every major must include enough math, science, and engineering that *any midshipman, regardless of his academic major, qualifies for selection to the nuclear power program*."[8] This strong emphasis on technical subjects further shifted the officer corps to the more technically specialized quadrant.

The increased emphasis on technical and commensurate decline in generalist studies came at a cost. Officers spent increasing time in nuclear power, flight, and missile radar schools, which were important training institutions that contributed to increased technical performance. But this also led to an officer corps with declining joint and international education, and little knowledge of interagency operations.[9] The officer corps became more skilled in particular technologies but struggled to communicate across platform communities, across services and other parts of the national security community, and with non-English speaking countries.

Officer career paths should be aligned to produce a rebalanced officer corps that can better meet the needs of a divergent mission set.

Today the Navy acknowledges the need for officers to capably communicate and operate with other services, agencies, and countries. However, the "jointness" policy has simply been added to Cold War career requirements; little has been cut from the Cold War career path.

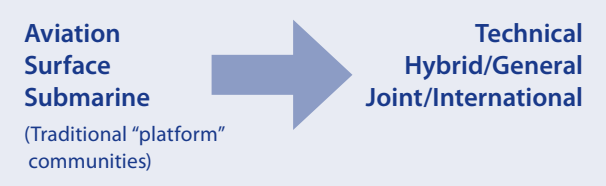
In 2007, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) endorsed a new strategy to develop greater language expertise and regional knowledge. In response, Naval Academy leaders are attempting to produce midshipmen who are technically expert and adept in a foreign language. This produces tensions for assignment detailers and officers alike: the officer who aspires to the highest command risks spreading herself thin as she attempts to master conventional navy war-fighting skills, gain more technical expertise, and acquire inter-service and international experience. In light of the changing national security environment, the current model of line officer has reached its limit and needs to be re-balanced.

Recommendations

Officer career paths should be aligned to produce a rebalanced officer corps that can better meet the needs of a divergent mission set. They should enhance joint/international/interagency skills, preserve conventional war-fighting skills, and maintain a core of officers with advanced technical expertise. Some reforms are already under way, such as the Language Regional Expertise Culture (LREC) initiative sponsored by the CNO. But additional steps should be taken to improve balance in the officer corps.

One option would lengthen line officers careers in order to provide sufficient opportunities to master new fields of knowledge. This raises three considerations: whether a sufficient number of officers can master multiple fields; whether a concomitant proliferation of older officers might not fare well with the rigors of sea duty and joint operations; and whether the officer corps may lose some of its capacity for innovation and new thinking.

Figure 5: Restructuring Naval Officer Career Tracks



Spectrum of cross-cutting knowledge/skill sets. The URL communities would remain a key organizing structure for the Fleet, but individual officers would also belong to a second community not based on platform but on knowledge set: Technical, Hybrid/General, Joint/International.

An alternative would be to restructure the officer career, creating three groups whose identity complemented but extended beyond platform specialization: a technical group, joint/international category, and a third cluster of hybrid officers who possess a foundation in both technology and joint/international knowledge, similar to the traditional general line officer (see Figure 5).

- **Technical Operations.** These officers would also command at sea, but early on would receive a rigorous technical and scientific education. This kind of officer would command most, if not all, the nuclear-powered ships. Technical track officers would also constitute the selection pool to man the Navy's more technical staffs and organizations. These officers would also help develop cyber capabilities and the growing fleet of UAVs/UUVs and other emerging robotic systems.
- **Joint/International Operations.** Officers who followed this track would qualify for command at sea but be educated and assigned to prepare for increased responsibility in highly integrative commands: joint/overseas and interagency staffs. To be prepared to lead in senior joint/regional commands, officers on this career track would focus on foreign language, regional cultures, and joint duties in these regions. Officers in this career path might be especially well qualified to support the President's National Security Professional Development (NSPD) integration initiative.[10]
- **General/Hybrid Operations.** This officer would receive a general-integrative education, one that included a broad exposure to the technical and non-technical: engineering, science, humanities, and a foundation in a foreign language. This group would command at sea, but be better equipped to improve intra-service integration across the navy's multiple platform communities. Given their academic grounding in language and regional cultures, the General/Hybrid Operations officers would be expected to help bridge the gap between the Technical and Joint/International officers.

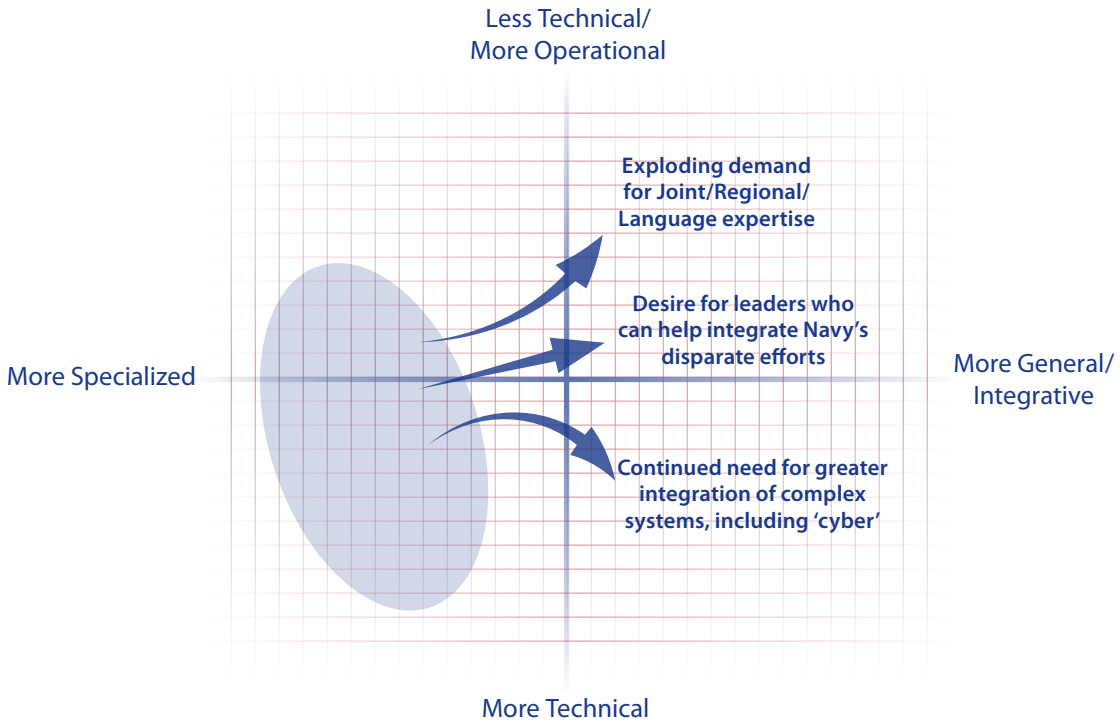
OFFICER UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE EDUCATION

The Naval Academy commissions its midshipmen with a rigorously technical Bachelor of Science degree, but if there is support for moving in the direction of a tripartite officer development strategy, this will, of necessity, lead to some reevaluation and retooling of the USNA curriculum.[11]

For example, a joint/international operations undergraduate track would incorporate existing professional military and engineering courses with a new focus on the humanities, social sciences, and foreign languages. A shift away from a highly technical undergraduate degree might produce fewer midshipmen eligible for nuclear power training, but it would not compromise an officer's ability to command in aviation and non-nuclear surface communities.

Midshipmen in the technical track would pursue specialized degrees with a modest core of humanities courses, which will prepare them for

Figure 6: Rebalancing Toward "Integrative" Quads



The three tracks of "Joint/International," "Hybrid-General Operations," and "Technical" will educate, train, provide integrated experience, and ensure the promotion of the officers needed to rebalance the Navy's officer corps.

Source: © OTIS Quad Model

assignments in nuclear power, weapons, communications, robotics, and electronics.

Those midshipmen in the general/hybrid operations track would be preparing for careers as integrators, resembling the "General Line Officer," the predominant model produced during the first two decades following the Second World War. These candidates would be directed to a course of study with additional language, humanities, and social science courses. It is anticipated that demand for linguistically-trained and culturally-aware officers will grow relative to the platform billets in ship and aircraft organizations. Given budget realities, the inventory of Navy platforms may level off while joint assignments continue to grow. An informal count in 2008 indicated almost 350 general and flag officers held joint/interagency billets, of which 150 were in unified combatant commands and 50 on the Joint Staff.[12] Given such a large and growing demand for experienced joint officers, a career model that better prepares more midshipmen for these duties is prudent. For those who pursue a technical track at sea, ashore, and in graduate school, the current congressional requirement that all line officers complete Joint Professional Military Education in order to be eligible for flag selection may need to be reconsidered.

ASSIGNMENT POLICY

To complement officer corps reform, the Navy must execute fundamental reforms in assignment and promotion practices. Sea duty can serve to reinforce any one of the three knowledge sets: technical, joint, or general/hybrid. Depending on whether the goal is to promote more technical specialization or greater integration, joint/international operations officers would typically be assigned to less technically demanding billets at sea; technical track officers would fill most at-sea technical billets; and general/hybrid operations officers, given their broader base could fill billets in either of the other fields.

Early in their career, joint/interagency track officers would be assigned to joint or regional duty as interns on the Joint Staff in Washington or in regional combatant commands. Refresher tours in languages would be scheduled periodically, just as technical proficiency is maintained in aviation and nuclear career paths. Technical-track officers would be slotted to rigorous technical assignments early in their careers and later transition to one of the Navy technical corps. Again, Hybrid/General Operations officers would retain the flexibility to fill assignments in either of these broad categories.

PROMOTION AND SELECTION FOR COMMAND

For more than a generation, platform communities have largely determined who will be the Navy's senior executives, the flag officers. It is to be expected that platform communities will advocate on behalf of their best performers, but such platform-centrism offers little support for officers who have excelled in joint, international, interagency, or technical assignments not closely linked to a parent platform community. Therefore, promotion and selection boards must be rebalanced so that the officers chosen for flag rank validate the new service commitment to varied career paths.

Promotion and selection boards must be rebalanced so that the officers chosen for flag rank validate the new service commitment to varied career paths.

Conclusion

Some may argue that the Navy "hasn't lost a war" and therefore the current officer corps model has been successful. But success in yesterday's battles is no guarantee of victory in tomorrow's. In the years following the First World War, a panel of three Navy captains — chaired by future four-star admiral Ernest King — reflected on the events of that war. Though the Navy had produced highly qualified leaders who had helped win the war against the German U-boat, the chairman of the panel was critical of the existing personnel system. To King, the year of victory parades — 1919 — was not the time for the Navy to reaffirm its "tried and tested" career patterns. The world had changed, and King wanted the officer corps to change with it. King had qualified amid the rigging of sailing ships, had fought in the Spanish American War, and was among the first to acknowledge that the old officer development system's "prewar career patterns had been overtaken by events."[13] What followed was a profound revolution in naval officer education, assignment, and promotion, orchestrated in the wake of victory.

The Navy today hasn't lost a war, but the nation's defense establishment is straining to meet the many demands placed upon it. And the lessons of history suggest that this is precisely the moment to rethink, retool, and rebalance the Navy's officer education and career patterns, ensuring that they produce another century of the best naval officers on the seas.

ENDNOTES

[1] See also Admiral James Stavridis, USN and Captain Mark Hagerott, USN, "The Heart of an Officer: Joint, Interagency, and International Operations and Navy Career Development," *Naval War College Review* (Spring 2009): 27-39.

[2] The subject of this discussion is the Navy officer corps known as the "line"—those officers who command in the field and at sea. Though they are critically important to the overall functioning of the Navy, this paper will not discuss specialized staff officer communities such as medicine, dentistry, logistics or engineering duty officers (EDOs). Note, EDOs are considered line officers by law, but are not qualified to command at sea, and will thus be referred to as staff.

[3] Arleigh A. Burke, ADM, USN, "Letter from the Chief of Naval Operations to All Line Officers," *Line Officer Personnel Newsletter* (September 1956).

[4] B. J. Semmes, Jr. Vice Adm., USN, "Policy on Education for Unrestricted Line Officers," memorandum from Chief of Naval Personnel to all unrestricted-line flag officers (9 February 1966). Semmes's memo indicates that in 1966 almost 88 percent of all URL flag officers had been educated at a war college.

[5] W. B. Franke, Under Secretary of the Navy, *Report of the Committee on Organization of the Department of the Navy*, 1958–59 (Washington, DC: U.S. Navy Dept., 1959); R. T. S. Keith, Rear Adm., USNR, *Billet and Post-Graduate Educational Requirements in the Specialty Areas in the Line of the Navy: Report of Board* (Washington, DC: U.S. Navy Dept., 1 October 1959).

[6] See report by H.C. Bruton, RADM USN, "Report of the Board to Study Personnel Aspects of Nuclear Power Utilization in the Navy" (20 August 1954); see also Francis Duncan, "Rickover: the Struggle for Excellence" (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2001): 104.

[7] See Mark R. Hagerott, "Commanding Men and Machines: Admiralship, Technology, and Ideology in the 20th Century U.S. Navy," Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland (College Park, MD: 2008). The best evidence of the changing career patterns is found in successive editions of the *BUPERS Manual* and *The Naval Officer's Guide* (1951–1983).

[8] Bruce M. Davidson, "The Academic Dean Looks at the Academy," *Shipmate*, no. 3 (March 1973): 26. Davidson was the academic dean of the U.S. Naval Academy [emphasis added].

[9] An example of the Navy's approach can be found in the relatively small number of line officers who have been educated in, and are experienced in, Middle East security studies. Based on December 2006 data provided in a Bureau of Personnel inventory of subspecialties, of the approximate 19,000 URL officers queried, less than 50 were considered qualified in the National Security — Middle East subspecialty (code 2101p). "Proven" subspecialists, officers who followed up their education with assignments in the region, were even fewer, numbering in the low teens.

[10] The NSPD integration initiative was approved in 2007 and is being implemented across all national security related agencies of the U.S. government. NSPD seeks to create more government leaders who are able to integrate across agency lines and thereby improve national security.

[11] Commissioning programs based upon the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) and the Officer Candidate School (OCS) (Newport, RI) would also need to be considered in a formal study of the officer corps.

[12] Approximate count derived from unified combatant command and Joint Staff directories in fall 2008. These numbers are inexact and change on almost a daily basis, but they provide a general order of magnitude of the significant number of joint/interagency billets that are now required to be filled.

[13] T. B. Buell, *Master of Sea Power: A Biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1980): 55.

CHAPTER V:
STRATEGIC LEADER DEVELOPMENT FROM AN AIR FORCE PERSPECTIVE

By Colonel Roderick C. Zastrow, USAF

Keeping The Edge:
Revitalizing America's Military Officer Corps

STRATEGIC LEADER DEVELOPMENT FROM AN AIR FORCE PERSPECTIVE

By Colonel Roderick C. Zastrow, USAF

There is much to learn from organizations that overcome institutional resistance to change and adapt to new circumstances. Over time, the Air Force has exploited profound technological advances in aerodynamics, space flight, microelectronics and telecommunications; it developed the ability to launch global reach strategic airlift every 90 seconds, to maintain a global satellite network, and to conduct strategic air operations with Cold War bombers electronically tied to Special Operations.

However, the new security environment poses a different sort of test because irregular warfare, with its idiosyncratic social, cultural and time span dimensions, challenges military applications across technological-social-cultural divides. This complexity dictates the need for senior leaders who have mastered their service-related functional area and who can also adroitly operate in unstructured, dynamic environments with multiple actors and across varied physical and cognitive domains.

This strongly suggests that the Air Force should again adapt by implementing policy and institutional changes to develop the senior leaders of tomorrow — the lieutenants and captains of today who will lead the air and joint forces within the next two decades. The process of adaptation will not be easy. For example, in a 2007 study, the U.S. Army identified groups of competencies needed for senior leader development, including cultural awareness, mental agility, governance and enterprise management.[1] They concluded that the service had lost the institutional capacity and knowledge to conduct a range of counterinsurgency-related operations, which meant that they were faced with the prospect of introducing widespread cultural change.[2] The Air Force is at a similar juncture now.

A Framework for Preparing Senior Leader Competencies

Military strategic leadership development begins with service-centric educational and experiential learning.[3] Subsequently, promising officers attend mid-career, joint professional-military education schools, gain joint staff experience and exercise service-specific command.

Without sufficient broadening of perspective through educational, staff, and operational experiences, air leaders risk falling short of the necessary competencies necessary for geographic combatant command.

Although Air Force doctrine recognizes the value in experiential learning, its culture clearly reflects a preference for narrowly-focused training over broader education.[4] In practice, an airman's career focus is in technical skills training at the tactical level, and in staff skills at the operational level. While this approach works well to produce expert tacticians and operational artists, it may not adequately prepare airmen for the complex problem-solving skills and broad perspective necessary to lead joint forces and multi-agency efforts. Without sufficient broadening of perspective through educational, staff, and operational experiences, air leaders risk falling short of the necessary competencies necessary for geographic combatant command. To correct that, the Air Force should retool its senior leader development model so that superior air commanders can qualify for selection as joint force commanders.

For example, the Air Force could examine its leadership development from accession to senior command through the lens of technical-operational and specialized-integrative dimensions similar to proposals made earlier in this paper by Navy Capt. Mark Hagerott, and could adapt this concept for different mission sets, operating contexts and organizational culture.

Paradoxically, the demands of the strategic environment increasingly require excellence at both ends of the leadership development spectrum. At one end, rapid advances in technology drive constant innovations in military subsystems, platforms and operating concepts, requiring officers with a high degree of technical aptitude. At the other end, the forces of globalization create a need for leaders to be culturally aware and operationally flexible to conduct missions ranging from humanitarian crises to counterinsurgency warfare. To meet these divergent strategy demands, the Air Force must have capable leaders with the ability to integrate a diverse and highly challenging mission set of deployment activities and homeland security tasks.

All of this suggests that the Air Force should pursue a multi-track training and officer development strategy that addresses technical-social-cultural and specialized-integrative needs and later merges these tracks while maximizing joint, interagency and international experiential development opportunities.

UNDERSTANDING OTHERS

While air leaders arguably have the broadest geographic perspective of all the services, there is still ample opportunity and need to further their understanding of ground and naval perspectives — though the vice versa is also true. The need is driven by complex multi-domain and multi-mode (hybrid) operating environments, and the need

to effectively articulate airpower concepts and capabilities to land, naval and civilian leaders not wholly conversant with the potential and nuances of airpower. Being able to bridge inter-service cultural divides strongly suggests understanding others' point of view. The opportunity lies in the benefit the nation would gain through more balanced approaches and innovative solutions to complex, emerging strategic challenges. To address this gap, a wide range of opportunities should be provided in cross-service professional military education and instructional experiences, senior service and national war college faculty teaching positions, joint staff and operational tours, intra-service and external exchange tours, internships, fellowships, and graduate civil education.[5] The added value in making these fully available is to build relationships of understanding and trust among the services.[6]

And like all military senior leaders, they will gain broadened perspectives across mission sets, physical domains, and with governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations at home and abroad. In order to make these opportunities a reality, assignment and promotion policies must be altered in order to attract enterprising leaders and then broaden their perspectives.[7]

EMBRACE THE FULL ARRAY OF MISSION AREAS

Senior Air Force leaders must be exposed to experiences in mission areas beyond that of conventional warfare. The United States' success in waging conventional conflicts has driven adversaries to indirect and asymmetric strategies with a wide variety of technologies and methods. As a result, the most recent National Defense Strategy reinforced the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report's guidance for U.S. military forces to better distribute emphasis and capability across irregular, disruptive and catastrophic threats.[8]

Until 2007, the Air Force regarded irregular warfare as a phenomenon that could be dealt with through ad hoc measures in doctrine, organization and force development. This stymied innovation at the operational level that might otherwise have exploited the inherent strengths of airpower.[9] Coupled with the blurring of service roles and missions, others stepped in to fill perceived gaps in operational capabilities — such as the U.S. Army's Task Force ODIN, which created a single-service, organic unit-assigned approach in the air-ground environment that contradicted joint doctrine precepts.[10] However, there is new evidence that the Air Force is adapting to the demands of irregular warfare through recent initiatives such as its 2009 Irregular Warfare Strategy, which will strengthen its role in irregular warfare.

In addition to organizational strategies, service leadership should examine non-traditional operational strategies, which will stimulate organizational thought and innovative thinking around issues such as countering WMD or building partner capacity to tackle seemingly inextricable problems.

In addition to organizational strategies, service leadership should examine non-traditional operational strategies, which will stimulate organizational thought and innovative thinking around issues

such as countering WMD or building partner capacity to tackle seemingly inextricable problems. Ongoing efforts such as the 12th Air Force's nested approach to the Southern Command's Theater Security Cooperation Strategy offer examples of how airpower can be applied in unconventional ways.[11] Such approaches can develop critical thinking skills in air leaders as they synthesize technological, social and cultural dimensions of the theater into a campaign.

Applying airpower tenets to contemporary irregular warfare, WMD proliferation, and other challenges presents an opportunity for the Air Force to collaborate in solving complex problems at the strategic and operational levels. This approach creates true joint opportunities rather than the "call us when you need us" modus operandi that has limited interservice cooperation.

Personnel management systems can capitalize on these efforts with assignment and promotion policies that cross-assign officers between conventional weapon systems and irregular warfare missions, which would broaden the future leadership cadre's perspectives at the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

FULLY INVEST IN JOINT OPERATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Air Force senior leadership would benefit from more robust command and staff participation in all elements of joint operations, especially military support to stability operations. Balancing focus and forces across mission areas requires a full commitment of airmen as commanders and key staff members to joint force commands.[12] Complex warfare operations demand frequent commander interaction between joint force commanders and their component commanders in order to ensure visible, coherent approaches to the operational problems. Current Air Force command and control doctrine, founded on combat experiences in high intensity conflict, requires adaptation to extended campaigns. It also needs to adapt to decentralized execution requirements for stability and irregular warfare operations, and may call for even more radical approaches for cyber warfare.[13]

In an attempt to improve integration in joint force and component commands, the Air Force has chosen to attenuate this command-and-control limitation with a liaison, called an air component coordination element (ACCE). Existing USAF doctrine avoids placing an air commander at a joint task force and suggests only a theater-wide joint force air component commander (JFACC), which is the case today. The belief stems from aircraft capability as well as air command and control ability to task and operate aircraft across multiple theaters (Iraq and Afghanistan) within the CENTCOM area of responsibility. While this allows for dynamic retasking, theater-wide approaches and some posture efficiencies, it so far has precluded a dedicated air commander for Multinational Force-Iraq (MNF-I) or International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operations.[14] The ACCE interacts principally at the staff level rather than command levels, limiting opportunities to build trust and perspective among joint communities. Compounding the problem, the absence of a joint task force construct in Iraq and Afghanistan has been a significant factor in a shift away from true joint force representation in both OIF and OEF headquarters command staffs. The result has led to an imbalance of air and land force perspectives.

To exploit the full value of senior airmen's perspectives, joint force commanders should avoid "dual-hatting" commanders as functional or service component commanders in stability operations environments where they often double as land force commanders. Efficiencies sought in dual-role headquarters have marginalized under-represented functions such as the air component. Not surprisingly, some airmen returning from MNF-I staff billets have complained about the marginalization of airmen on headquarters staff and of airpower. The typically shorter tour

duration of airmen on these staffs, typically four months as opposed to one-year tours for others, further exacerbates the problem of building trust between airmen and joint commanders.[15] The same situation occurred in the late 1990s with the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina.[16]

The absence of airmen's perspectives in joint force and multinational headquarters can negate opportunities for incorporating the significant and unique capabilities of airpower. The asymmetric nature of airpower, especially in unopposed stability operations environments, calls for greater incorporation into command structures and operational design. The effect of marginalizing airpower perspectives in these environments also has the secondary but long-term consequence of inhibiting organizational learning. In the case of Iraq, the lack of significant airpower representation on the MNF-I command group and staff has arguably robbed the Air Force of a half-generation of experience that future senior leaders of joint commands will likely need. In the end, the Air Force should seek to fully invest in joint command structures while also seeking greater adherence of the joint force to joint command and control doctrine.

DEVELOP STRONGER CAMPAIGN DESIGN AND PLANNING EXPERTISE

Gaining competency in joint campaigning at the operational level of war remains a difficult challenge.[17] This difficulty for airmen arises from the operational structural differences between air and land forces stemming from their inherent operating differences. Land force commanders typically organize, train and equip their forces for combat, as well as lead those same forces in combat or other operational missions.[18] The land force commanders thus receive repeated campaign design and planning experiences throughout their career. Conversely, the air component approach results in a very flat organizational construct, thus removing multiple layers of operational command. While this construct enables airpower's hallmark organizational efficiency, it incurs a cost for developing operational commanders by removing multiple operational command opportunities between the tactical and operational levels.[19] Air Force leadership development policy should explore new ways or leverage existing opportunities to offer periodic campaign design and planning opportunities from major to major general levels. This may include strengthening the Joint Operational Planning Process culture within professional military education venues. Other initiatives could include adjustments to force commander selection for Red and Green Flag exercises, initiating periodic theater air command and control exercises — live, virtual or mixed — for squadron, group and wing commanders. Where possible, these could be tied to fellow service exercise or campaign design and planning efforts to further increase airmen's perspective.

OBTAIN POLICY DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

Air Force culture must evolve from one that too often treats joint assignments as experiences to be endured to one that embraces them as part of a coherent investment to broaden perspective and skills. Air Force assignment policies require greater care in matching its best and brightest to rewarding policy-related staff opportunities in the Office of the Secretary of Defense staff and the Joint Staff and Combatant Command staffs. Insight gleaned from these experiences and the long-term relationships that develop from them can provide a foundation for strategic decision-making in the political-military realm.

BROADEN INTERNATIONAL AND INTERAGENCY EXPERIENCES

Understanding the perspective of allies and other governmental agencies is critical, but getting there will be difficult. It took Congressional direction to force the services to send promising officers to joint education and staff assignments and to alter military education curricula. However, there is

The Air Force should consider assignment and promotion policy changes that provide at least one overseas assignment in a career and one position that provides the opportunity to interact in interagency activities.

little policy guidance or incentive for services to send likely future general officers on international or interagency tours, and finding windows of opportunity to serve in these tours will pose a challenge. The Air Force should consider assignment and promotion policy changes that provide at least one overseas assignment in a career and one position that provides the opportunity to interact in interagency activities.

TREAT EDUCATION AS A CONTINUOUS INVESTMENT FOR THE FUTURE

Air Force senior leaders would benefit from a policy shift that views education as a continuous rather than episodic investment.[20] The Air Force's policy has vacillated on whether to acknowledge officers' advanced academic degrees during promotion consideration. This has undermined the perceived value of civilian education as an investment tool.[21] Yet, education should be a daily and career-long activity. One approach that can work is for mid- and senior officers to create informal individual learning or development plans, updated annually.[22] Embracing exposure to diverse perspectives offers the opportunity to gather new ideas, synthesizing them into new and exisiting concepts. Building on Dr. David Kolb's experiential learning model, daily and diverse reading and educational activities such as senior officer professional digests, national security conferences, and seminars can provide a powerful leadership development approach to broadening perspective, which in turn helps leaders frame problems and generate new knowledge.[23]

EXPAND CIVILIAN EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Air Force aviators experience a tightly knit development path that discourages any diversions from flying assignments. Attending a graduate-level civilian program would, in many cases, interrupt the current warrior-to-commander career progression. As a result, the long-term benefits of obtaining advanced academic degrees at civilian institutions will require adjusting career tracks and selective career milestones. Assignment and promotion policies must adjust to reward those who pursue a non-traditional career developmental track; and this would allow for assignment flexibility in providing alternative educational opportunities to strengthen strategic leader perspective.

ADOPT 360-DEGREE ASSESSMENTS OF LEADERSHIP

Rising senior commanders can benefit from the perspective of their supervisors, peers and subordinates through periodic assessments of their leadership skills. Because the typical first command opportunity for Air Force aviators occurs at the lieutenant colonel level, comprehensive leadership assessments are often delayed well into their careers.[24] This contrasts with most land service officers who often command at much earlier points in their careers. As a result, the relatively late command experience warrants a 360-degree assessment by superiors, peers and subordinates prior to their first command in order to identify areas to emphasize during their initial command. A post-command assessment would then help identify attributes and behaviors requiring formal attention in order to serve effectively at the next level of command.[25]

ADJUST CAREER PROGRESSION MILESTONES

A constellation of new and uncertain factors are placing increasing demands on the military profession — a broadening defense mission set, the challenges of complex or "hybrid" warfare, increasing emphasis on preventive approaches to warfare, and expanding operations into space and cyberspace domains. In order to effectively deal with these and to facilitate the provision of opportunities to broaden officer perspective, the USAF should adjust career progression milestones or seek policy adjustments to career length limitations.

Air Force leader development policy, geared to achieve general officer promotion timelines, crowds a three-command ladder of progression at the lieutenant colonel to senior colonel level typically within a six- to seven-year timeframe. This command compression, plus senior professional military education timing, squeezes out policy development and other opportunities at the colonel level. A shift in Air Force developmental policy towards one that prioritizes the value of experience, whether in organizational or operational environments, over the focus on the position would allow greater flexibility in achieving command at the squadron, group and wing levels.[26] Widening the timeframe to obtain these command experiences might also introduce opportunities for colonel-level officers to obtain policy development or other necessary broadening experiences.

A Holistic Perspective

The changing dynamics of the security environment should provide both ample motivation and an opportunity for the Air Force to rethink how it develops senior officers who can become highly successful joint force commanders. But to do so, it will need to view education and senior leader development as a continuous effort to broaden officer perspectives, which will require expanding the range of educational opportunities beyond science and technology to include languages, humanities, and social sciences. It will also call for a more balanced approach that incorporates deliberate policy and interagency-international experiences to help build mature, intellectually keen, senior leaders who can address the complexity of today's global security environment. And as this begins to take effect, the Air Force must initiate assignment and promotion policy changes, which can be expected to face stiff cultural resistance. As a consequence, there must be a clear institutional commitment from the senior service leadership to embrace these diverse mission needs.

ENDNOTES

[1] U.S. Army War College, Review of Education Training, and Assignments of Leaders (RETAL) (unpublished), (April 2007): 2. See also the 2007 Army Posture Statement information paper on RETAL, found at http://www.army.mil/aps/07/addendum/b.html by clicking on "Review Education, Training and Assignments for Leaders" (8 March 2009).

[2] See U.S Army Field Manual 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3-33.5, *Counterinsurgency*, Forward (December 2006), http://www.usgcoin.org/library/doctrine/COIN-FM3-24.pdf (8 March 2009).

[3] Military leader development assumes that leadership is learned rather than assumed by birth. See Chip Heath and Dan Heath, "Leadership is a Muscle," in *Fast Company* (July/August 2007): 62-63. http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/117/column-made-to-stick.html (8 March 2009).

[4] AFDD 1-1, 11. Specifically, ". . . deliberately exposing people to a broader range of experiences . . . [thus] the Air Force creates leaders who are more flexible and adaptable in a force . . ."

[5] Author experiences in Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and at the U.S. Army War College point to repeated anecdotes of airmen not understanding a ground perspective, and vice versa, leading to distrust.

[6] Dr. Cathy Downes, "Transforming Leader Education," presentation at Transforming Transformation Seminar, National Defense University (Ft McNair), (24 February 2009); and taken from subsequent discussions.

[7] Air Force Colonel (ret.) Stephen Wright, faculty member of the School of Advanced Air and Space Studies (SAASS) explains, "The policies associated with 'assign to — promote from' reveal the service's leader development quantity and quality measures. Assignment and the promotion discriminators tell others what the service values, quantitatively by what it assigns to and qualitatively by what it promotes from. As such, these measures are clearly understood by the organization's membership and will be ascribed to despite what words, contradictory or complementary, flow from the lips of leadership."

[8] Department of Defense, "National Defense Strategy" (June 2008): 4, http://www.defenselink.mil/news/2008%20national%20defense%20strategy.pdf (8 March 2009).

[9] This does not dismiss the many innovations that emerged over the past five years such as B-52s performing close air support and linking unmanned air vehicle video surveillance with ground crews.

[10] See Thom Shanker, "At Odds with Air Force, Army Adds Its Own Aviation Unit" (22 June 2008). http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/22/washington/22military.html (8 March 2009). See also, "Task Force ODIN," http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/tf-odin.htm (8 March 2009).

[11] See Captain Rebecca Garcia and Captain Nathan Broshear, "Twelfth Air Force (Air Forces Southern) Prepares for Busy 2009," http://www.12af.acc.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123137933 (8 March 2009). See also 12 AF's Operation Southern Partner webpage outlining their 2009 theme of "Soft Power." The webpage also provides links to detailed partner activities, http://www.12af.acc.af.mil/library/operationsouthernpartner.asp (8 March 2009).

[12] The author's experience with Stabilization Force (SFOR) in 1997-1998 revealed an institutional approach towards stability operations that culturally avoided placing the air component commander (who was himself dual-roled as a force provider in his 16th Air Force commander role in Naples, Italy) or other than a bare minimum of airmen on the SFOR staff. This was complicated by the dual-roling of the joint force headquarters and land component headquarters.

[13] See "Wurster on Phase Zero Operations," Air Force Association, *Daily Report* (27 February 2009). http://www.airforce-magazine.com/DRArchive/Pages/2009/February%202009/February%2027%202009/WursteronPhaseZeroOperations.aspx (8 March 2009). See also, Dan Dupont, "U.S. Commander Wants Prop Planes In Iraq," *Wired* "Danger Room" blog (8 April 2008), http://blog.wired.com/defense/2008/04/less-fuel.html (8 March 2009). See also, "Cyber Warfare: The Epitome of Irregular Warfare," Air Force Association, *Daily Report* (27 February 2009) http://www.airforce-magazine.com/DRArchive/Pages/2009/February%202009/February%2027%202009/CyberWar — theEpitomeofIrregularWarfare.aspx.

[14] Lt General Gary North, Commander, Central Air Forces (CENTCOM), unclassified briefing, "CENTAF" to Air War College, (25 November 2008), slides 7, 9, and 26. While the author does not discount the USAF arguments, based on historical case study of General MacArthur, Commander of Southwest Pacific operations in World War II and his senior airman, General Kenney, there is precedent to having an overarching theater air commander as well as lower level air commanders without the disaggregating effect of parceling airpower. In the contemporary case, it would require new command and control arrangements, but is possible. See George S. Kenney, *General Kenney Reports*, Office of Air Force History (Washington, DC: 1987 Edition): 63-65.

[15] The Air Force has recognized this distinction and has created a number of 365-day positions to add personnel stability in key positions in overseas combat headquarters.

[16] For example, the author was the only airman present of 13 senior staff officers for planning the transition of SFOR I to SFOR II. The USAF maintained a liaison command presence at SFOR headquarters with only monthly visits by the commander. This led to increasing resistance and hesitance to utilize airpower not from the Army-centric leadership but rather from the airmen planning air operations at the combined air operations center in Vicenza, Italy. Informal discussions revealed an air force view that stability operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina were principally a landpower domain requiring limited airpower interaction both in forces and in headquarters representation.

[17] See the U.S. Army's TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5-500, "Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design" (January 2008). See also Stefan Banach and Alex Ryan, "The Art of Design," *Military Review* (March/April 2009), http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20090430_art016.pdf.

[18] In essence, land units function both as force providers and force employers, or in other words, surface force commanders "fight" their forces. This contrasts significantly from the Air Force construct.

[19] This dilemma stems from the stark distinction between the Air Force's organizational (force provider) and operational (employment) command structures. The USAF's Title 10 training and force provider structure has numerous command levels similar to other service structures. However, the aforementioned operational (employment) command structure is a flat command and control construct. It efficiently cuts out mid-level commands leading to highly adaptive combat flying operations. Meanwhile, this structure inadvertently removes mid-level planning and execution opportunities for mid-level officers.

[20] Admittedly the USAF changed its policy thus removing the distinguished graduate program in favor of including grade point averages and a rank order evaluative system at its Air War College. However, it maintains distinguished graduate policy for its attendees at the National War College and Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Alternatively, the U.S. Army War College policy is guided by an interesting quote from J.F.C. Fuller, "We shall teach each other: first because we have a vast amount of experience behind us, and secondly, in my opinion, it is only through free criticism of each other's ideas that the truth can be thrashed out . . . During your course here no one is going to compel you to work, for the simple reason that a man who requires to be driven is not worth driving . . . Thus you will become your own masters and until you learn how to teach yourselves, you will never be taught by others." Taken from Major General J.F.C. Fuller's initial lecture on taking over as Commandant of the Army Staff College, Camberley, UK (January 1923). As recorded in: J.F.C. Fuller, *Memoirs of an Unconventional Soldier* (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1936): 417–418.

[21] The conflict between dedicated time to obtain advanced academic degrees and a heavily populated aviator officer corps on a tight leadership progression path works against a culture that values a warrior-scholar leader. See "The Pendulum Swings," on AFA Daily Report, http://www.airforce-magazine.com/DRArchive/Pages/2006/April%202006/April%2017%202006/1070swings.aspx (8 March 2009).

[22] Several war colleges require students to develop a year-long individual learning plan in which students identify goals, priorities and strategies in achieving them.

[23] See Mark K. Smith, "David A. Kolb on Experiential Learning," http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-explrn.htm (7 March 2009).

[24] While the number of aviators relative to non-rated officers has shrunk dramatically, the USAF continues to largely populate its senior command structure with aviators. So long as this remains the case, the point remains valid. Air Force officers in several career fields take command at more junior ranks.

[25] 360-degree assessments require sufficient funding and specialized assessors to be effective. Past efforts that treated these assessments as an "additional duty" have typically foundered.

[26] Air Force leader development policy has historically focused on granting "commander credit" for what happen to be Title 10 force provider (organizational) commands. The Air Force's approach to warfighting (operational) command over the years has effectively resulted in only the joint force air component commander, most often a general officer, "fighting his forces." Thus, colonel level command positions are nearly all force provider rather than operational command tours.

CHAPTER VI:
REVITALIZING AMERICA'S OFFICER CORPS

By Dr. John A. Nagl and Brian M. Burton

Keeping The Edge:
Revitalizing America's Military Officer Corps

REVITALIZING AMERICA'S OFFICER CORPS

By Dr. John A. Nagl and Brian M. Burton

Despite the magnitude of American military expenditures and the undoubted courage and commitment of the members of our armed forces, the performance of the American military since the end of the Cold War has been less than uniformly successful. It struggled to adapt to the demise of its peer competitor, the Soviet Union, and the emergence of a new series of threats that have shown themselves most clearly in the aftermath of the successful short, sharp interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003.

Operational experience in the post-9/11 world has demonstrated that powerful conventional forces are not always well-suited for the kind of war that some enemies choose to wage. For example, apparently successful short-duration campaigns to topple the governments of Afghanistan and Iraq turned into costly, protracted campaigns when U.S. opponents turned to irregular warfare as a countervailing strategy to our conventional one. American military leaders struggled to understand and adapt to a kind of war for which they were unprepared. The elements of the U.S. military's organizational culture least conducive to irregular warfare — most notably the inattention towards understanding foreign cultures and peoples and a difficulty relating operational and tactical means to strategic ends — were revealed to painful effect.[1]

Organizational cultures can be changed, but doing so takes time and enormous effort, generally both from inside and outside the institution.[2] Only a professional officer corps well attuned to the constantly shifting challenges and opportunities that mark the 21st century can create a military force

that is truly a learning organization. The U.S. military must develop a model that trains and educates officers for the complex interactions of the current threat environment while being agile and versatile enough to adapt to a swiftly changing world beyond. The military must also be agile enough to change its personnel policies, its promotion procedures, and even its vision of itself in order to attract and retain the people it needs to lead the armed services in this new era. This concluding chapter operationalizes responses to the strategic and domestic environments in which military officers will have to perform their duties in this century, providing a series of broad recommendations for consideration by the services, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the U.S. Congress to help America keep its officership edge.

Persistent Requirements for Officer Development

Fortunately, the United States is not starting from scratch in developing an officer corps suited to the changing operating environment. The U.S. military officer corps is already a well-developed institution that shapes its members into competent and effective defenders and servants of the nation. Despite the perpetually transforming face of warfare, there are certain qualities of officership that hold constant. Even as warfare has become more specialized, and the business of fighting on behalf of the state has evolved, professionals with knowledge of soldiering, seamanship and airmanship will be the sine qua non of the world's leading military organization. These touchstones of officership must be re-established and preserved as the keystone upon which all training and education are anchored.

The process of developing and professionalizing a military officer must begin with the native abilities of those who aspire to and are selected for officership. Chief among these basic requirements is physical health and vigor. An officer must be physically capable of performing his job and leading those under his command. The physical dimension is a seemingly mundane but profoundly important aspect of officership that is correctly emphasized at the time of accession and in early training. A military officer is by necessity preparing throughout his or her career for the harrowing experience of leadership in combat, which requires some modicum of physical fitness depending on the officer's duty position. Additionally, the ability to lead by example, to do the same things and live the same hardships required of subordinates, is a time-honored and effective means of encouraging them to continue in the midst of trying circumstances. This physical presence is a trait commonly noted among the great military commanders throughout history.[3]

Basic physical capability can be improved and developed over a career in uniform if the raw material is there at the start of an officer's career; the same is true for the moral component of officership. In order to lead by example and serve as the nation's expert practitioners of military affairs, officers must be trustworthy, loyal, and beyond moral reproach. Officers receive a commission charging them to support and defend the Constitution of the United States; they necessarily go about this obligation in accordance with the ideals expressed in that document. Additionally, officers in leadership positions must accept responsibility for what occurs on their watch. These are serious obligations, necessitating that America's military officers be screened carefully for their moral character. The demands of warfare among the people make this moral component of officership even more important in today's strategic environment; the unique moral requirements of leadership in a counterinsurgency environment

was the driving force behind the inclusion of a chapter on leadership in the Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual published in late 2006.

Linked to both the physical and moral aspects of officership is the intellectual dimension. The elected civilian leadership of the country turns to the officer corps for advice on how the military instrument contributes to national strategy. With the nature of conflict and international affairs becoming increasingly complex, and with more difficult demands being placed on junior officers, the intellectual component of officership is becoming increasingly important. Military officers are expected to possess the intellectual acumen to carry out their responsibilities, as well as to develop intellectually over time as their level of responsibility increases with rank.

An officer has a responsibility to think about conflict and how he or she can best contribute to success in combat. He or she must also have an understanding of how the tactical or operational realm encompassing his or her own responsibilities fits into the broader picture of achieving national objectives. The ability to anticipate and react to change in the nature of conflict is the critical distinguishing intellectual feature of the profession of officership; in a time of rapid strategic change, this need for intellectual flexibility and perceptiveness is particularly acute. Achieving this goal will require changes in the training and education of officers, but also in their concept of officership as a profession with lifelong developmental responsibilities. Changing the training and education programs will be essential in developing that new identity.

Frank Hoffman's six "leadership lines of operation" provide a way for officers to conceive of their full responsibilities in the modern era as professionals responsible for using military force to achieve national objectives across the spectrum of conflict. The officer corps in the U.S. military must ensure that it conducts rigorous and professional preparation for all types of warfare — becoming, in Hoffman's words, "a full service profession for the full spectrum of conflict."[4] It must focus on the operational level of war rather than the tactical, integrating military tools with all elements of power to achieve campaign objectives.

The profession must be ethically sensitive and morally beyond reproach in order to maintain the support for its operations by the American people, often accepting greater personal risk in order to increase the chances for mission success.[5] The profession of arms must produce officers who are situationally intelligent and culturally aware in order to operate effectively

With the nature of conflict and international affairs becoming increasingly complex, and with more difficult demands being placed on junior officers, the intellectual component of officership is becoming increasingly important.

in modern "wars among the people;" if protection and support of the local population is the key terrain, a new standard of understanding them is essential.

The profession must reorient itself on supporting the needs of the nation, even if at some cost to an individual officer's freedom of expression and eagerness to advocate for policies. The tensions of nearly a decade of war have led to a fraying of the civil-military relationship, but the profession should refocus on its proper role of candid and confidential counsel to civilian decisionmakers.[6]

Finally, the officer profession must commit itself to a lifetime of dedicated study of strategy, politics, economics, and history. Adaptive leaders are those who are always open to learning.[7]

The military's capacity to carry out the missions assigned to it in the 21st-century operating environment is inseparable from the effectiveness of the education and training it provides to its personnel, especially its officer corps.

Shifting Imperatives for the Future Officer Corps

Although many essential attributes of officership remain constant, emerging strategic trends highlight the importance of some new attributes and career development options. This will require rethinking the balance between the need for specialists and generalists at different ranks. The need for more narrowly focused experts in any number of fields has been a hallmark of the information age, and shows no signs of abating.

Here again, the demands of irregular warfare create a new set of questions about the specific responsibilities and requirements of generals, field-grade officers, and company-grade officers and calls on service leadership to determine the proper balance between deep expertise in one small subset of requirements of officership and the broader strategic perspective that is necessary for senior leadership of a branch or service. The services should also provide opportunities for additional career flexibility, and actively encourage experiences outside of traditional career paths.

The need is clear for a model that trains and educates officers for complex interactions in current threat environments, and to promote those who demonstrate the ability to adapt swiftly to complexity and ambiguity. The military's capacity to carry out the missions assigned to it in the 21st-century operating environment is inseparable from the effectiveness of the education and training it provides to its personnel, especially its officer corps. As succinctly stated by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, "In the end, the military capabilities we need cannot be separated from the cultural traits and reward structure of the institutions we have: the signals sent by what gets funded, who gets promoted, what is taught in the academies and staff colleges, and how we train."[8]

Education in different languages and cultures will be especially important, as will additional training in media relations and the use of information to achieve campaign and national objectives. But the most important changes have to come in promotion decisions; to change the culture of an institution, change the people who lead it, and change what attributes it rewards. This will be both the most challenging and the most important adaptation to the current system that selects, educates, and trains officers for the demands of this century.

RECONSIDERING TALENT DISTRIBUTION AND CAREER TRACKS

The complex operations in which American armed forces are engaged today demand that military officers understand a broad variety of topics and have the capacity to integrate capabilities to achieve mission success. They must understand the capabilities and mission of their unit or platform, as well as the role of forces from other services, allied military forces, civilian government agencies, IGOs and NGOs. An officer in Iraq or Afghanistan must not simply command her unit but also work with indigenous forces, other services, allied international troops, and humanitarian organizations; a commander patrolling on sea or in the air off the coast of Somalia must coordinate with international shipping and foreign navies. In both cases, technical, human, and political aspects must be considered and integrated by the commander in the field.

Yet there is substantial tension in officer training programs between cultivating excellence in tactical and technical competencies, and developing qualities needed for operating in complex environments in concert with multiple partners. A more holistic officer development program is required to counteract a disproportionate focus on tactical training rather than on strategic education.[9] Strategy and warfighting are integrative tasks, requiring not only the ability to operate specialized equipment or to command a tactical unit, but to understand how different pieces fit together and communicate effectively with partners to ensure the achievement of objectives. These skills are increasingly required at a more junior level, particularly in forces engaged in irregular warfare or stability operations. Cultivating them requires developing a greater level of strategic understanding and interservice, interagency, and international understanding at lower levels in the officer corps.

The solution, however, cannot be as simple as adding even more to the already-packed training and professional military education curriculum for junior and intermediate-grade leaders. An officer's first requirement is to perform competently at her station, a skill set which demands substantial training time and resources to master, and which cannot be shortchanged. Yet some are suggesting that new interests, such as language and cultural training, be added around the margins of the current system. The Army, for example, has suggested that its officers must be "pentathletes." As then-Secretary of the Army Francis Harvey wrote:

> The Army's vision for leaders in this century is that of the Pentathlete — a multiskilled leader who personifies the warrior ethos in all aspects, from war fighting to statesmanship to enterprise management… Through the proper balance of unit experiences, training and education at all levels, we must produce leaders who are decisive, innovative, adaptive, culturally astute and effective communicators. In addition to being experts in the art and science of the profession of arms and demonstrating character and integrity in everything they do, they must be astute at building teams, boldly confronting uncertainty and solving complex

problems while engendering loyalty and trust. Above all, our future leaders must be strategic and creative thinkers dedicated to lifelong learning. Only through that commitment will we develop leaders thoroughly comfortable in leading, managing and changing large organizations as well as skilled in governance, statesmanship and diplomacy.[10]

This objective is laudable, but developing a whole officer corps of "pentathletes" may prove to be unrealistic within a training and education system constrained by limited capacity and rigorous deployment schedules.[11] Military training and education, like any other endeavor, is an exercise in managing scarce time and resources. This is particularly challenging within the Navy and Air Force, as well as the more technically oriented military occupational specialties within the Army and Marine Corps, where the demands of mastering a specific system or platform absorb a greater amount of effort. Trying to make every officer a jack-of-all-trades means that every officer will be a master of none.

A more effective way than the "pentathlete" model would be to develop an appropriate balanced distribution of talents across required knowledge areas within segments of the services' officers through more differentiated career paths. For example, Mark Hagerott proposes replacing the Navy's platform career tracks (aviation, submarines, and surface warfare, all leading toward the same destination at flag rank) with three tracks — technical, joint/international, and generalist — that lead to different types of command positions which optimize an officer's specific experience.[12] Joint/international track officers would develop expertise in a region and on joint or interagency staffs and would be groomed to serve the specialized operations function; the technical track would focus officers on honing their specific platform or system skills, and the generalist track would comprise a corps that could bridge the gap and provide the general integrating function. An officer corps divided primarily among platforms or branches may be less effective in the future than one that provides complementing career tracks intended to optimize the integration of technical and human aspects of military operations. While the military will continue to need officers with all of these skill sets, the demands of modern warfare require an increasing number who have the ability to integrate operational design and execution at ever lower levels.

Achieving this objective will be enormously challenging; identifying what to eliminate from the current officer professional development system is the first task. What follows are suggestions for changes to that model to increase career flexibility, provide opportunities for broadening experiences earlier in an officer's career, cultivate linguistic and cultural knowledge, and enhance officer communication skills.

ALLOWING ADDITIONAL CAREER FLEXIBILITY

Current officer career paths were built for a very different military than the one we have today. Encouraging the accession and retention of more of the best available talent into the officer corps will require offering more diverse and flexible career paths that encourage risk-taking and unconventional assignments. Increased use of sabbatical years — particularly to pursue higher education or gain additional experience in an unconventional assignment while also allowing "downtime" from deployments for families — would provide additional career flexibility for future generations of officers who will not be satisfied with the military's current industrial-age personnel management.

Additionally, as military sociologist Morris Janowitz noted, "The issues of national strategy, international relations, and career assignments continuously intrude on the consciousness of the professional officer, but day-to-day realities of family and military community are essential elements of his professional world."[13] For example, since the 1970s, the percentage of married personnel in the U.S. military has increased by 12 percent, and has more than doubled in the Army.[14] At the same time, there has been a significant increase in the number of households in which both spouses work.

Today, non-military spouses in professional fields sometimes earn more than the officers they are married to. With frequent deployments and military bases located in relatively less populated areas, job opportunities for the civilian spouses of military officers are limited. While moving to Fort Sill to take battalion command may be a career enhancing move for an Army officer, the same is less likely to be true for her civilian professional spouse. The difficulty of maintaining a healthy family life amid reassignments and deployments is now a commonly cited reason for talented young officers who decide to leave the force. These cultural changes affect military careers more than any other American profession; an officer assignment system that ignores these changing dynamics will force officers to choose between career and family, and both will lose.

One possible solution is to provide officers with the option to take a sabbatical for a reasonable period of time — perhaps one or two years — in order to deal with family issues, pursue graduate education or gain additional experiences beneficial to their military careers. Officers returning to the service from this "gap year" should incur no career penalty, although they should have the option of documenting their experience in their official military records, as the knowledge and skills they gain may be of use for a military force that will require greater breadth of knowledge (as well as more experts with great depth in particular areas) in the strategic environment of this century.

The military should also consider more lateral entry options that go beyond accelerated promotions given to those with specialty skills such as doctors and lawyers. There is potentially great value in letting an officer work in private industry for a few years and return to uniformed service — conceivably with the potential of promotion over rank last served — to recognize additional skill sets and experience gained in private industry for, say, an officer who works in weapons acquisition or logistics fields. Better recognition and employment of these outside experiences and talents could allow the military to attract or retain some of the most innovative and dynamic talent in today's workplace.[15]

ENHANCING OFFICER EDUCATION

There is also much to be said for getting career officers outside of their uniformed comfort zones and into an academic arena in which the very foundations of their world view are challenged.[16] Some of the most successful commanders in the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been those who spent several years in the middle of their careers earning graduate degrees in political science, economics, international relations, and strategic studies. Often these educational experiences were enriched by assigning these officers as instructors at service academies following completion of their studies.[17]

Even with additional opportunities for development at civilian institutions of higher learning, the majority of officer training and education will continue to be provided by the services themselves. The current system of professional

military education focuses on the tactical level of warfare and on junior officers.[18] Retired Major General Bob Scales has proposed the creation of a Senior Strategist Program (SSP) that would fence the most demanding operations and strategist positions in the military and fill them with "officers educated in a program of demanding, selective advanced schooling and preparation."[19] This idea is borrowed from the German General Staff, which selects the most talented strategists relatively early in their careers and provides them with special schooling and assignments, and builds upon existing programs designed to train strategists at each of the Staff Colleges (with the exception of the Naval War College at Newport, which does not currently offer such a program). John Allen Williams notes the importance of these relatively small investments: "Only a small number of officers will develop into strategists of the first rank, but these are so important that the PME system must do as much as it can to encourage them to develop their talents to the maximum degree possible."[20]

Periodic studies have recommended such changes in the professional military education system, but these studies have largely been ignored. Williamson Murray remarked in recent Congressional testimony that he had made similar recommendations nearly a quarter of century ago and that most of his concerns remain as relevant now as they were then. Murray noted that "producing a mind that is able to grasp the strategic level of war requires the transition to a broader understanding of conflict from [officers'] earlier conditioning… Improving the analytic capabilities of officers and teaching them how to deal with 'uncertainty and ambiguity' should begin before commissioning and be pursued concurrently with training throughout the whole professional development process."[21]

Creating the cadre of strategists necessary for the most intellectually demanding positions in the armed forces requires two reasonably simple steps. Murray points out that "in almost every other First-World military organization today, entrance to the system of professional military education comes only through written and oral examination in which the prospective students have to prove on paper their intellectual preparation and capabilities thus far in their military career for service at the higher levels of command."[22] This entrance examination, in conjunction with a graduation order of merit that became a permanent part of an officer's military record, would go a long way toward diminishing the anti-intellectualism that often hinders the development of the officer corps needed for today's most demanding requirements.

Additionally, distance learning and self-directed online education can provide important and flexible education program for officers. Although the face-to-face interaction available at "brick-and-mortar" schools is preferable, current technology makes the establishment of a continuous PME program more practical than ever. Some elements of the military, such as the U.S. Army's Combined Arms Center, have already begun to embrace Wikipedia-type collaborative sites to provide a forum for learning and even modifying doctrine. Social networking sites can encourage the creation of communities of interest and a more personalized online experience that can become a powerful tool to enable lifelong learning.

Today's PME system makes insufficient use of such non-traditional tools to enhance professional development. A lifelong PME system would allow the military services to design adaptable programs that balance necessary warfighting skills with a broader exploration of

pertinent topics to include language and cultural studies. Electronic education may be more cost effective for an already fiscally constrained military and certainly minimizes the disruption to personal lives caused by family moves to resident professional military education institutions. Online education is more convenient for busy officers swamped with other professional requirements. In addition, the curriculum can be rapidly changed to the meet the changing strategic situation. Such programs could be managed by the current education and training commands of the respective services and fill the periods between in-residence PME. The program should not be designed to produce experts in non-military subjects but be geared toward better equipping officers to understand and influence the political and cultural complexities that could affect their military activities.[23]

Finally and perhaps most importantly, PME must continue into the general and flag officer ranks, the senior leaders of the institution and those most responsible for strategic and enterprise leadership.[24] The current system of officer education essentially stops with promotion to one-star general or admiral, although recent changes to career timelines mean that officers can serve for another fifteen years or more after pinning on their first star. At a time of increasingly rapid change in the strategic environment, it is absolutely essential that the most senior officers be engaged in a progressive series of educational experiences — and that their performance in those institutions of higher learning be factored into promotion and slating decisions. Not all general or flag offices are created equal; those with true strategic acumen will demonstrate that skill in properly organized and resourced educational systems.

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INCREASING OPPORTUNITIES FOR EARLIER JOINT, INTERAGENCY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MULTINATIONAL (JIIM) EXPERIENCE

While 21st-century officers must learn the enduring principles of officership, the teaching and training of officers must change to meet the contemporary demands and opportunities they face. From being able to collaborate with other units and foreign armies to working with a myriad of non-governmental organizations and civilian governments, an officer must be trained to think beyond the principles of war. In order to achieve national strategic objectives, the officers must be trained to work with representatives from non-governmental organizations, intergovernmental agencies, and foreign nationals.

Because future conflicts are likely to involve operations with other services, agencies, and allied forces, experience in Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational

assignments is essential to familiarizing officers with various actors who will play an important role in future conflicts. It will also enhance an understanding of how those capabilities can be leveraged to accomplish U.S. national objectives. In particular, military officers need to more fully understand the strategic capabilities and operational limitations of the State Department in order to be effectively utilize those assets. And while it is impossible to educate all officers in all of the capabilities of all of the intergovernmental and multinational actors they are likely to see on the battlefield, it is critically important that they be exposed to a representative sample of these actors — preferably in their first Joint Professional Military Education experience. The officer corps would also benefit if JIIM tours were available earlier in careers, enabling more junior leaders to take advantage of these experiences in their commands in the field. An expansion of exchange programs with other militaries, particularly non-Western forces, would be beneficial because American officers often operate with local allied forces who are often less well developed than they are. Getting officers out of their comfort zones earlier would help cultivate greater understanding of how to work with indigenous forces in combat situations.

CULTIVATING LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

Building relationships of trust with foreign forces and civilian populations, often critical to achieving successful outcomes in operations in foreign countries, would be greatly aided by an expansion of foreign linguistic and cultural knowledge within the officer corps. A lack of language skills and cultural knowledge has proven to be a major challenge to conducting effective stability operations, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan. Such capabilities have generally been relegated to relatively small special operations, civil affairs, or foreign area officer contingents. It is unrealistic to educate every officer to some useful standard in a foreign language, but the advantages of having a broader base of linguistic and cultural awareness in the corps, particularly among junior leaders in the field, should not be dismissed.

All of the services currently employ limited language and culturally based pre-deployment, "just-in-time" training, but this is insufficient for achieving success in the long run. Both language training and cultural education take time, and should start early and be reemphasized throughout an officer's career. Training should examine a variety of cultures and ethnicities, and avoid the practice of "fighting the last war" where the focus is on the history and culture of current enemies. This should be a major plank in any restructuring and refocusing of the PME system.[25]

Again, the question of time constraints comes into play: How to develop more linguistic and cultural training when there is so little time available in training and education schedules? One possible model is the Marine Corps's designation of every Marine as a specialist in a specific geographic area, and provides them with educational materials and incentives to engage in self-directed learning. In some cases officers will be assigned on active operations to the area which they have studied in depth, with obvious benefits for their ability to operate effectively. However, the effectiveness of this model is unclear; it may fall victim to the same time constraints and competing demands that challenge other education initiatives. A different, and perhaps more enduring, solution is to increase the institutional demand for these skills by expanding officer billets, such as the Army's Foreign Area Officer specialty, that require these capabilities and ensuring that these billets present clear and ample promotion paths to positions of command

or staff responsibility. Currently these positions offer fewer direct paths to career advancement, while commands go to officers with backgrounds focused more exclusively on operations. By altering this practice, officers who have developed linguistic and cultural competencies could be spread throughout the force and serve in positions where their skills could make a measurable difference in the field.

Another option is to require linguistic and cultural training for prospective officers before their careers begin. At West Point and the U.S. Air Force Academy, all cadets regardless of their academic major must enroll in a minimum of two semesters of foreign language study. Majors in non-technical fields must study a foreign language for four semesters. At both schools, opportunities to study abroad have also grown substantially. The Naval Academy has recently instituted a foreign areas studies program, but foreign language classes remain voluntary electives. In addition, there is no language requirement for most officers who earn their commission through ROTC, Officer Training School or other officer training programs. Although cadets gaining their commission through ROTC have the opportunity to study foreign languages, it is not mandatory except under provisions applicable to certain types of ROTC scholarships.[26] Not every officer needs comprehensive foreign language skills, but cultivating a broader base of that competency within the officer corps as a whole is vital. ROTC and military academies can add language and cultural education requirements early on, or at least provide additional incentives for such programs. Because language and cultural understanding are best provided in an immersion environment, ROTC programs and military academies could encourage increased participation in civilian study abroad programs, especially in critical languages such as Arabic and Chinese. Officer candidates could be provided with an additional stipend for achieving and maintaining proficiency in these languages and for their experience abroad.

ENHANCING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Outcomes in current and future conflicts are likely to hinge in part on shaping perceptions through both words and deeds. The ability to compete in the "battle of the narrative" in public domains is thus an essential task for which more officers will need to be educated and trained in strategic communications, understanding that their role in this endeavor may be as important to the success or failure of American policy as is their skill with executing combined arms operations against the enemy.

To its credit, the military is further ahead on this issue than agencies such as the State Department, which resist allowing field personnel to issue statements that have not been cleared in Washington. By contrast, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have put more junior leaders, particularly platoon and company commanders, under the media microscope as never before, and they have generally proven capable of adapting to the demands of engaging with the media and the population. Still, additional media training that simulates the stresses of actual operations should continue and be offered to commanders and executive officers during pre-deployment training. These tactical level leaders will have the most current knowledge about their operations, and will be best suited to respond to developing situations that can shape the narrative. They should be authorized to speak about their operations and U.S. objectives in "lay language," and in lieu of central headquarters public affairs officers who are often far removed from theaters of action.

PROMOTING THE RIGHT PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT SKILLS

Ultimately, the most important factor in ensuring that the profession of arms is able to meet the demands of national security in this century will be the people selected to lead the services. Currently, promotion instructions favor some skill sets that are relatively less useful than they were during the Cold War, while neglecting to reward those of greatest importance in the emerging national security climate. Tactical excellence often determines who gets promoted, but this results in tacticians being promoted to positions of strategic leadership for which they are often poorly suited by temperament, ability, or training and education.

This problem is closely related to one of changing strategic priorities for military forces in the current environment. Thirty-five years ago, Morton Halperin identified the proclivity to reward those who excel in accomplishments in what is perceived to be the core function of the organization: "Military officers compete for roles in what is seen as the essence of the services' activity rather than other functions where promotion is less likely… [For example,] Army officers compete for roles in combat organizations rather than advisory missions."[27] However, when advisory roles become as important as combat operations, it takes external pressure to change promotion patterns.

This process can be seen most clearly in a recent Army brigadier general promotion board. The selection to one-star positions is crucial in all of the services; although just five percent of O-6s make the cut, half of those who do will wear two stars. In late 2007, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates took the highly unusual step of tasking General David Petraeus to chair a promotion board that selected a number of innovative and experienced colonels for brigadier general rank, removing him from Iraq at a critical time in that fight. Retired Major General Scales applauded the choices and highlighted the importance of the selections: "This sends a signal to the junior officers who are laboring in the trenches, literally, that the Army is trying to cast itself in a new mold… The quickest way to change the Army is at the brigadier general level. That is the surest way to turn the ship, because those names are how those young officers intuit where the Army is going."[28]

Promotion evaluations should not stop when the first star is pinned on. The current system of war games and evaluation techniques does not focus enough on leadership abilities in strategically ambiguous situations. General officers should be evaluated in terms of their abilities to form teams capable of solving political, economic, logistical, and operational problems under the most demanding circumstances imaginable. And assignment to their next position should be based at least in part on their demonstrated ability to succeed in those roles. Future selection boards will need clear instructions to properly assess those holistic attributes in candidates for promotion that will be most valuable for anticipated future conflicts, and they should be chaired by officers cognizant of their responsibility to shape the future force to prepare for and meet those demands. Moreover, guidance and oversight for vital selections to three- and four-star rank, made without promotion board input by service chiefs, must be closely examined. This is the single most critical step in creating the officer corps America needs to protect itself in this century.

Conclusion: Officership for a New Age

Today, the United States relies on its military to carry out a wider array of missions than ever before, including many of a nontraditional character. Its officers are frequently the first responders and sole representatives of the U.S. government on the ground in hot spots and war zones around the globe. How they deal with the circumstances they confront, even at the tactical level, can have strategic consequences. While the profession of officership will continue to require physical, mental, and moral excellence, the U.S. military must also recognize that certain aspects of the current shape of the officer corps must change in response to new demands emerging from the global operating environment. The U.S. military must rethink old assumptions about warfare and how it will prepare military leaders in the 21st century to meet new tactical, operational, and strategic challenges.

Precisely predicting the nature of these engagements is impossible, but we have learned that officers must be trained and educated to succeed throughout a spectrum of operations — building partner capacity and combating a broad array of enemies who will attempt to exploit perceived American weaknesses and who will challenge U.S. forces through asymmetric means. The model by which officers are recruited, trained, educated, and employed has not yet fully adapted to the nature of conflict in the 21st century. Although there is much that should be preserved in our conception of officers as national security professionals dedicated to the common defense, there is also much that should be changed in order to ensure that America continues to enjoy the best trained, best educated and most adaptive leaders for the conflicts that the nation will face in this century. Finding the balance between preserving what works and redesigning what must be better is crucial to maintaining America's officership edge. The emerging strategic environment will provide both challenges and opportunities to those who have the tools necessary to handle the unexpected, and to do so with honor and integrity.

ENDNOTES

[1] For a critical analysis of the failings of the military profession in Iraq and Afghanistan, see Richard H. Kohn, "Tarnished Brass: Is the U.S. Military Profession in Decline?" *World Affairs* (Spring 2009).

[2] The best sources are Stephen P. Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991) and Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991). For an examination of the effect of organizational culture on military innovation in wartime, see Dr. John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[3] Paul Yingling and Dr. John Nagl, "The Army Officer as Warfighter," *Military Review* (January/February 2003): 10.

[4] Frank G. Hoffman, "Embracing a Full-Spectrum Profession," in John A. Nagl and Brian M. Burton, eds., *Keeping the Edge: Revitalizing America's Military Officer Corps* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, February 2010)

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[11] Andrew Feickert, "Does the Army Need a Full-Spectrum Force or Specialized Units? Background and Issues for Congress," Congressional Research Service RL34333 (18 January 2008): 18.

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[13] Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (New York: The Free Press, 1971): xxxiv.

[14] DOD, "Population Representation in the Military Services," Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Arlington, VA, 2007. See also Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009) for the changing nature of service in an all-volunteer force, and the additional incentives required to maintain quality in such a force under wartime conditions.

[15] See Casey Wardynski, David S. Lyle, Michael J. Colarusso, *Talent: Implications for a U.S. Army Officer Corps* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, November 2009): 17-21.

[16] David H. Petraeus, "Beyond the Cloister," *The American Interest* (July/August 2007).

[17] See David Cloud and Greg Jaffe, *The Fourth Star: Four Generals and the Epic Struggle for the Future of the United States Army* (New York: Crown, 2009): especially Chapter Four, "The Department."

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[20] John Allen Williams, "Statement before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, House Armed Services Committee" (10 September 2009).

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[23] Colonel Pollyanna Montgomery, USAF, *Building Better Strategists* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College Strategy Research Project, 15 March 2008).

[24] LTG (Retired) David Barno, "Testimony before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations" (10 September 2009).

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