The Journal of
Military Operations

Discussions On The Conduct of War

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A Note From The Editor

Welcome to this first edition of Military Operations.

War is important. War changes the fate of nations and, at times, whole continents. Warfare is the conduct of war; so it, too, is highly important. So, one would expect to find many good and well-produced publications about warfare.

There was clearly something missing from the marketplace. We looked for a good, readable publication which discussed warfare. We found nothing. We found several good in-house army journals which did many things; all of them understandable from the perspective of the organisation concerned, but which rarely talked about warfare. We found a few other high-quality journals which talked a lot about security and international relations; but rarely talked about warfare. We found some first-class academic history journals. Some of them talked about the history of war, and occasionally about warfare in history. But we found no single publication which focuses on how armed forces do, and should, fight wars.

We found several extremely capable, knowledgeable, and experienced people who were prepared to spend time advising us. They now form our editorial advisory panel. Between them they have hundreds of years of military experience. They have also undertaken many decades of research, writing and editing on warfare. They have written numerous books and hundreds of articles and papers. They include soldiers and academics; paratroopers and marines; tank and cavalrymen; gunners and sappers. We are most grateful to them for agreeing to help us.

We started asking people to contribute articles. Within just twelve hours we had offers of enough material to fill not just one, but two editions. Twelve hours! There was clearly something missing from the marketplace. Military Operations aims to meet that demand.

Military Operations is about warfare, the conduct of war. It will normally focus on war on land. It aims to foster debate and discussion. We are quite prepared to be contentious. We do not have an institutional line to take. Some of our articles will present just one side of an argument. That is quite deliberate; we will publish them because we believe that the argument should be heard. We will happily publish the other side of the argument, if somebody is prepared to capture and describe it.

A publication such as Military Operations will only be as good as the articles it receives. It will always rely on people writing and submitting high-quality, useful, insightful and (above all) readable articles. That means you! If you have an idea for an article please get in touch with us. The submission guidelines are at https://www.tjomo.com/submission-guidelines/ and our e-mail addresses are at https://www.tjomo.com/faq/#A14.

The articles in this first edition represent a broad spectrum in many ways. Its authors range from having virtually no military experience to having served for decades. Some have almost no formal education; others are at PhD level. The subjects range from an analogy between Vietnam and Afghanistan, to a philosophical discussion of the operational level of war, to the case for a military parachuting capability.

Sergio Miller's comparison between Vietnam and Afghanistan raises the spectre of eventual strategic failure. That, of itself, is a significant issue; but the article also suggest why the eventual collapse of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam has never attracted the analysis it deserves. Perhaps even more tellingly, it also highlights what can be called 'excessively optimistic' over-reporting of the capabilities of the indigenous forces which western armies develop and leave behind. This seems to be an enduring feature and hence a lesson for the future.

Simon Anglim's analysis of the relevance of Orde Wingate to contemporary operations provides a useful sequel. At one level, and quite tellingly, it highlights severe limitations to the value of indigenous forces. Perhaps even more importantly, it tells us that those limitations were explicitly captured in the 1930s. It reminds us that the only history lessons which we've never learned are in the history books which we haven't read.

Doron Almog commanded a battalion in the Israeli Operation 'Peace for Galilee' in 1982. His article describes from first hand how the Israeli Defence Forces' (IDF's) practice of leadership from the front actually works. It is not without its problems: half of all the IDF killed in action in that conflict were commissioned officers. Israel could, and did, accommodate that cost; not least because the overall cost in killed was relatively low. Intriguingly, however, Almog's article also tells us that having commanders well forward allows them to easily identify and exploit opportunities for tactical surprise. Surprise is the biggest single factor for battlefield success (the subject of a future article); thus leadership from the front may be a major factor in the IDF's successes and, importantly, in achieving success at relatively few casualties overall.

William F. Owen's article asserts that the operational level of war does not, or should not exist. In effect he tells us that it is a human artefact invented to cover a lack of tactical skill; for example, tactics which are sufficient in themselves but do not deliver, nor lead to, the desired strategic

end point. The article represents an important landmark in the debate. It marks, perhaps, a realisation that the 'Operational Level of War' may just be a fashion amongst military writers.

Human artefact is also central to Adam Elkus's article on denial and deception in war. The eventual target is human: it is the human mind. That has not changed, and so although technology may appear to reduce the opportunity for denial and deception, it also presents weaknesses and hence opportunities. To that extent, military denial and deception is a good example of the notion that although war may change its character, its fundamental nature does not change. That is much to do with the fact that war and warfare are fundamentally human endeavours.

David Benest is a highly experienced former paratrooper. He was at one stage the British Army's Director of Defence Studies. Perhaps not surprisingly, he makes a case for a national military parachute capability which is strongly 'pro' and strongly British. Readers may disagree with his views. As with other issues covered in Military Operations, we would happily consider publishing articles which take a different perspective, because that is the essence of debate. Without open debate (in this case, about operational parachute capability) there is no progress; armies tend by default to fight the first battle of the next war like the last battle of the previous. We can, surely, do better than that.

Finally, I would repeat my plea: please contribute. Military Operations will only ever be as good as the articles it receives. We will publish articles of up to 3,000 words, or shorter pieces written as letters. We look forward to hearing from you.

Jim Storr
Editor, Military Operations
August 2012

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Building a hollow ANSF – Vietnam revisited?

Sergio Miller

In 2014, ISAF is due to withdraw the last of its combat troops from Afghanistan. The following year marks the fortieth anniversary of the fall of Saigon. The close coincidence of these events invites comparisons. The latter was memorably dominated by two compelling images: the frantic last-minute helicopter evacuations from a Saigon rooftop; and the crushing of the elegant, French gates of the presidential palace by T-55 tank Number 844 of the North Vietnamese Army (NVA). The *bo doi* (soldier) sitting astride the turret did not even bother to carry a weapon or wear a helmet. What was remarkable about that traumatic last week of April in 1975 was that just three years earlier the United States had withdrawn the last of its combat troops from the Republic of South Vietnam, leaving behind 400,000 trained soldiers in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), 250,000 in the Regional Forces (RF), and 175,000 in the Popular Forces (PF). All for nought. Ho's boys swept them away. Nobody knows if Kabul is fated to witness similar iconic scenes after ISAF's withdrawal, but the question is worth asking. This article compares the creation and training of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) and the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Lessons are drawn at the end.

Vietnam 1955-1973

There were three stages to the US training mission. From 1955-60 the threat was perceived to be a conventional invasion by the NVA across the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) on the 17th Parallel. To counter this threat, a force of 10 divisions was trained. This conventional army was never really tested until 1971 (an incursion into Laos[i]). It proved a fiasco and the ARVN had to be rescued by

American airpower dropping over 50,000 tons of bombs. (By way of comparison, 500 tons were dropped on the infamous wartime raid on Coventry).[ii] Three years later the ARVN was routed and no B-52s came to the rescue.

> ## THE MACV PORED OVER ITS STATISTICS AND SAW A WAR BEING WON, BUT MOST INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS SAW ONLY A POINTLESS QUAGMIRE

In 1960 the emphasis switched. The emergence of the Viet Cong (VC, or 'Vietnamese Communists') led to a focus on counter-insurgency operations. This was Kennedy's moment. The MAAG became the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV). American trainers, special forces and helicopters began to flood the country. By the time Kennedy's life was taken by an assassin's bullet in November 1963 there were over 15,000 US servicemen in Vietnam and the VC tide appeared to be receding.[iii] It proved a premature hope. Johnson campaigned as the anti-war president, but ended up taking his country to war. By 1967 there were two contradictory narratives: the MACV pored over its statistics and saw a war being won, but most independent observers saw only a pointless quagmire. The 1968 Tet Offensive claimed two principal casualties: Hanoi's hopes of a general uprising were destroyed, but more decisively, America's will to continue fighting was broken.

The last phase ran from 1969-1973. Under the Republican President Richard Nixon, 'Vietnamization' became the watchword (much like 'Afghanization' today). Vietnamization was a mix of the two previous polices. The ARVN received an injection of war materiel judged sufficient to defeat an NVA attack concurrently with the counter-

insurgency war (the 'pacification' campaign), increasingly fought by South Vietnamese rather than by American GIs or Marines. Nixon vowed that he would not be the first American president to lose a war. He kept his promise, but was powerless to halt the denouement. Thirty years after Ho Chi Minh made his declaration of independence in a square in Hanoi, Vietnam was finally independent and unified.

Afghanistan 2002-2012

The training of indigenous forces in Afghanistan has also witnessed three phases. From 2002 to about 2006, ISAF indulged in the worst sort of 'military tokenism'. Goodwill towards the US following the September 11th attacks soon evaporated. Nobody really wanted to be in Afghanistan and some did little to disguise this fact. It is hard to believe that for the first few years 'ANSF training' amounted to supplying a handful of radios and pick-ups to the presidential battalion in Kabul. US policy did not help in this matter as the Afghan Army – such as it existed – was disbanded in a controversial move that would be repeated in Iraq, throwing thousands of unemployed, armed, young men into the hands of militias and insurgent groups.

The second phase ran from 2006 to 2009. In response to a manifest deterioration in the security situation, ISAF began training serious numbers of ANSF personnel. The numbers proved to be the problem. Meeting targets and producing pleasing Powerpoints became substitutes for a firm, costed and realistic plan. Honesty was short. At the heart of the dishonesty was the 'Capability Milestone' (CM) rating system that was used to declare ANSF units ready for operations. When this was investigated by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) it was found wanting – in some cases, just parading guaranteed you a graduation certificate.[iv] ISAF had been churning out worthless *kandaks* (battalions) and glossing over the hollowness of the force it was creating.

> ## ISAF had been churning out worthless kandaks (battalions) and glossing over the hollowness of the force it was creating.

The third phase runs from 2009 to the present. General Stanley McChrystal galvanized the flagging war, and his counterpart at the NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A), Lieutenant-General William Caldwell, performed veritable heroics. CM was replaced at the beginning of 2010 with the Commander's Unit Assessment Tool. It is this far more rigorous and truthful methodology that is in place today, and which has resulted in the downgrading of the *kandaks*. The damage to ISAF's credibility has been more difficult to repair. Caldwell's effort may justifiably be described as heroic for two principal reasons. Firstly, the US' ISAF partners have repeatedly promised and repeatedly failed to deliver trainers, a situation that is only likely to worsen as the stampede towards the exit accelerates. Secondly, desertion rates are so high that the training 'sausage machine' can barely keep up. The arithmetic is all bad.

Vietnam and Afghanistan compared

The problems besetting the ARVN advisory mission in Vietnam would be familiar to anyone involved in training the ANSF today.

They included: a venal, incompetent and corrupt officer class, strong on ribbons of unearned medals but weak on dirty hands and boots; an unwilling soldiery that too readily allowed Americans to do the hard fighting; the inevitable haemorrhage from relentless combat (South Vietnamese soldiers may have been apathetic, but they also died in droves, as have the ANSF); a tendency to localism; a lack of initiative; illiteracy; language problems (doubly so as Indochina was the only Francophone region in Southeast Asia); logistic dependence on American aid and resources; strained relations with GIs who were often contemptuous of their allies and more respectful of the Viet Cong; an obsession with gross numbers at the expense of quality; staggering waste; reliance on a handful of reliable units (the Rangers, for example); critical dependence on American air power and medevac; and, of course, constant desertions.

> ## logistic dependence on American aid and resources; strained relations with GIs who were often contemptuous of their allies and more respectful of the Viet Cong

Other significant points of comparison can be found. Towards the end of the Johnson presidency one phrase haunted officials: the 'credibility gap'.[v] It became a media cliché. The high theatre of this gap was the 'five o'clock follies', the military press briefings at the MACV. Luckless army spokesmen would stand up and fire a barrage of positive statistics demonstrating success which a cynical press corps would jeeringly throw back. It was not just the press corps that wearied of the false narrative of success. Westmoreland's successor, General Creighton Abrams, also grew tired of being told that a district had been secured, stating: "if I cannot walk somewhere during the day without protection, or drive somewhere at night without protection, then a district is not secure". It became known as 'the Abrams Test'. At the time of writing, not a single district in Helmand passes the 'Abrams Test', after six years of fighting and many claims of success.

The Afghanistan War has similarly been subject to competing and contradictory narratives. The official government version is positive. In one of his most recent reports to Parliament, Foreign Secretary William Hague presented a picture of "progress", "professionalism" and "increasing capability".[vi] He cited Operation Naweed ('Good News') as "the first time that the ANSF have taken the leading role in campaign planning". He reported that the ANSF now take the lead in 40 per cent of operations. At the Lashkar Gah police training centre, the 5,000th recruit recently graduated. Overall, Parliament might be satisfied that the ANSF are demonstrating a "capability to manage the campaign in an increasingly independent manner."

Unofficial assessments, meanwhile, are predictably uniformly pessimistic. The most arresting recent example is that of Lieutenant-Colonel Daniel Davis (US Army), whose analysis of the situation in Afghanistan caused a furore at the beginning of the year.[vii] When a piece written by a serving military officer starts with: 'Senior ranking US military leaders have so distorted the truth when communicating with the U.S. Congress and American people in regards to conditions on the ground in Afghanistan that the truth has become unrecognizable', you can hear the collective gasp. Whether or not one agrees with Davis, it is plain from the manner in which the US government has been unwinding the war that Davis's position is

probably much closer to the National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs) that land on the president's desk than those offered by the purveyors of good news.

A third version of the truth is held by ISAF's training mission, the NTM-A. In a February media conference General Curtis Scaparrotti, head of ISAF Joint Command (IJC), was asked to reconcile the many versions of the truth. The interchange with the journalist is reminiscent of the Vietnam 'five o'clock follies' and worth quoting:

'Q: General, in your remarks, you talked about the Afghan forces increasingly taking the lead. Then you said you hoped they would step into the lead. And then you said your goal is to move them into the lead –

Gen. Scaparrotti: right

Q: – as soon as possible. Could you just square all that? And also, how many Kandaks can operate independently now? And have they done – has any of the Afghan forces done any independent operations? …

…Gen. Scaparroti: Out of the total, I don't have it right here on me. But it's – you know, you've got probably – I'd be taking a guess. I'm not going to give it to you, but I can get to you here in a minute. That's about – you know, that's about probably 1 percent, OK, to be honest with you. So it's a very low number.'

General Scaparroti's moment of discomfort may cause amusement but his honesty must also be acknowledged. According to NTM-A the status of the ANSF is as follows. Just 29 ANA kandaks and seven ANP units are truly independent (this is the one per cent figure). Around 42 per cent are 'effective with advisors'. The units mentored by Task Force Helmand fall in this category. The remainder – over half – are in poor shape and incapable of operating without significant Western help. These numbers beg an important question. If a decade of albeit halting, unsatisfactory and only latterly effective training has produced an ANSF where one per cent of units is independent, on what grounds does ISAF believe that it can transform the other 99 per cent in the next two years?

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Costs and sustainability

Washington has been carrying the financial burden of the Afghanistan War. The waste has been colossal, and thoroughly audited by bodies like the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the General Auditor's Office (GOA), and SIGAR (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction). Other nations, including the UK, have been coy about admitting the sheer scale of waste, fraud and embezzlement of taxpayer's money in Afghanistan. A recent three year study by the US bipartisan Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan[viii] concluded that 'at least $31 billion, and possibly as much as $60 billion, has been lost in contract waste and fraud in America's contingency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.'[ix] Nobody really knows the true figure.

The future cost of sustaining the ANSF has been estimated at anything between $5 billion and $10 billion per year. The Afghan government has no realistic hope of funding this commitment for the next decade or longer. The US has already signalled it will halve its funding by next year. It has also been reported that Washington is seeking to encourage allies to pledge around three quarters of the training funds. This seems a forlorn hope. The most dependable ally, the UK, recently announced that it would commit £70 million to ANSF training, or around one per cent of the required funds. As in so many other instances in the Afghanistan story, denial and deflection loom large.

We fight for our beliefs

The effectiveness of the ANSF, without ISAF, remains untested. A focus on military metrics, to a great extent, actually misses the point. The collapse of the ARVN in the spring of 1975 has never attracted great military analysis, for the good reason that the story had little to do with tanks and guns and all to do with the beliefs men hold that make them fight. Only Ho Chi Minh truly and popularly represented Vietnamese nationalism. Nothing had changed since 1945. If you were a South Vietnamese soldier manning a pillbox on the outskirts of Saigon, what were you being asked to die for – a corrupt government which lost its mandate years ago?

THE TALIBAN ARE NOT TRYING TO WIN A BEAUTY COMPETITION

Who holds the strongest beliefs in Afghanistan today? McChrystal was right when he warned that comparisons with Vietnam were flawed because the Taliban are not a popular movement like the VC, but he was only telling half the story. Nationwide polls have consistently shown that the Taliban enjoy less than ten per cent support. In the Pashtun south, however, support for the Taliban is higher, and this is where it counts. Moreover, the Taliban are not trying to win a beauty competition. They are trying to be the biggest bully in the neighbourhood. Nearly $600 billion worth of Western military might has been thrown at these tribesmen armed with AK-47s, and they have not given up. The question that should be asked is: why does anyone *not* think that the Taliban will win in the long term?

As the situation stands today, there are many reasons to forecast a bleak outcome. It may look something like this. With the withdrawal of ISAF, Afghanistan's insurgent groups will have their day, at least in their heartlands. They have suffered too much to give up now. Besides, there is no Pashtun tradition of surrender, only endurance and resistance. Pakistan will also have its day. The desire to avenge ten years of kow-towing to the US is too strong. Iran will enjoy a moment of *schadenfreude* over the West's humiliation. The narcotics trade will boom. Criminality will spread. The West's cosmetic championing of women's rights will dribble away. The drawing down of aid will provoke economic recession. Kabul politics will degenerate. An under-funded and hollow ANSF will crumble away in Khost, Kandahar, Helmand and other contested provinces. As in Vietnam, a Western intervention will have an unhappy ending.

Some lessons

Lessons from the unfinished Afghanistan War would fill a fat book. For the sake of brevity, a handful is listed below:

Nobody has ever won a war by 'spinning'. It has never happened and never will. Reporting must be honest.

Political settlement is the *sine qua non* of a nation-building, intervention operation against the background of an insurgency. The tragedy of Vietnam was laid in the 1954 Geneva Accords, as one day it may be judged that Afghanistan's tragedy was made in the 2001 Berlin Conference. The settlement must include the enemy. Failure to do so implies that the fighting will continue.

Realistic, affordable and sustainable funding must be secured at the outset. Intervening nations need to be serious about the costs of war and nation-building, including the creation of indigenous armies.

Expenditure (military and economic aid) must be ruthlessly controlled. The Third World is a bottomless pit for billions of dollars of Western taxes, dishonestly wasted in the name of 'doing good'; which, not uncommonly, has resulted in incontrovertible bad. If you cannot spend it effectively, don't.

Building indigenous armed forces is not an exit strategy. It is the entrance strategy. Every day not devoted to handing back the problem to indigenous forces is another day the intervening forces must remain in country.

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A realistic, costed and sustainable infrastructure for the indigenous armed force must be built *first*. It is easy to teach someone how to fire a rifle. It is much harder ensuring that the soldier receives bullets and everything else he needs (not least, regular pay).

An obsession with meeting targets and gross numbers is self-deluding. Quality matters.

Competent, honest, indigenous leadership is vital. Find, train and reward the good leaders. If they do not exist, leave.

Sergio Miller is an former Regular British Army intelligence officer who continues to serve part-time in Defence Intelligence and who works as a defence consultant in civilian life.

References

[i] Operation Lam Son 719.

[ii] See Bernard C. Nalty, The War Against Trucks, Air Force History and Museums Program, 2005

[iii] See the Pentagon Papers, the Kennedy Commitments for details on the build-up of the MACV from 1961-63.

[iv] Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction, Actions Needed to Improve the Reliability of Afghan Security Force Assessments, June 2010.

[v] Used in the phrase 'credibility gap' which actually began to appear towards the end of the Kennedy presidency when doubts began to surface over the direction of US policy in Indochina.

[vi] William Hague, MP, Afghanistan progress report for April 2012, April 2012

[vii] Lt. Col. Daniel Davis, Dereliction of Duty II: Senior Military Leader's Loss of Integrity Wounds Afghan War Effort, January 2010

[viii] Commission on Wartime Contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan, Final Report to Congress, August 2011.

[ix] Ibid, Executive Summary.

Orde Wingate And Paramilitary Support Operations: Messages For The 21St Century

Simon Anglim

In March 2011, a British 'diplomatic team', incorporating personnel from the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) and E Squadron, 22 Special Air Service Regiment (22 SAS), was detained while contacting anti-Gadaffi rebels in Libya. By April, reports emerged that 'former' SAS men and 'Private Military Companies' were 'advising' the rebels and providing forward air control for North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) airstrikes.[i] September brought official admission of the reality: D Squadron, 22 SAS, had coordinated Libyan rebel ground offensives with NATO airstrikes, most notably in the liberation of Colonel Gadaffi's home town of Sirte, while Special Forces from France and Qatar operated anti-tank guided missiles for the rebels and guided airstrikes elsewhere in Libya.[ii] Ten years before, US Special Operations Forces (SOF) deployed into Afghanistan alongside the Northern Alliance, controlling US Air Force (USAF) bombers and US Navy F-18s in close air support and providing a degree of coordination the campaign had previously lacked; in 2003, supporting the Kurdish *Peshmerga*, they had defeated Iraqi regular troops and Iranian-backed irregulars alike, taking Mosul, Kurdistan's biggest city.[iii] Military and paramilitary operations supporting armed uprisings appear to be a increasingly important component of 21st century warfare. Moreover, given current swingeing defence cuts and public distaste for large-scale overt deployments, they provide a means of achieving strategic aims cost-effectively and with a low political footprint, something the Libyan episode seems to have established, featuring as it did the rapid removal of a forty-year old regime still considered by some to be a regional power. In 2001, US SOF plus airpower plus the Northern Alliance toppled the Taliban regime in lieu of a conventional invasion. Wise, then, to seek guidance from previous practice.

Some countries have, or have had, entire 'fourth forces' devoted to such activity. An early example was the Military Intelligence (Research) branch of the British War Office, created in 1938. MI(R) and its sub-branch at General Headquarters (GHQ) Middle East, G(R), were staffed by British Army personnel and from 1940 to 1941, executed successful paramilitary support operations against the Italians in Ethiopia and Somalia and Vichy French in Lebanon and Syria. Their operation in Gojjam, Western Ethiopia, from December 1940 to May 1941, was commanded by their most famous operator – Colonel (later Major General) Orde Charles Wingate. Wingate was ordered to divert Italian forces away from the main British offensive into Eritrea, an offensive which led to a major battle around the fortified town of Keren, defended by 71 Italian battalions. 56 battalions, which might have reinforced the defenders of Keren or elsewhere, were pinned in Gojjam by Wingate's 'Gideon Force', which numbered at most 800 men plus variable numbers of local guerrillas. Eventually an Italian force of 14,000 surrendered to 150 British and Sudanese.[iv]

> **Wingate bears study: not only did he have extensive experience planning and commanding successful paramilitary support operations, but also put opinion to paper**

Wingate bears study: not only did he have extensive experience planning and commanding successful paramilitary support operations, but also put opinion to paper, arguing they were the wave of the future (in 1942) and offering doctrinal advice for them.

He advocated what current soldiers call 'manoeuvre warfare' carried out by specially-trained regular troops alongside local irregulars and supported by air, as seen with Gideon Force in Gojjam in 1941 and the Chindit operations in Burma of 1943 and 1944.

If the operations listed in the introduction are the product of recent times, Wingate was a product of his own. The British Army, for the previous 200 years, had fought 'small wars' 'out of area' to build the Empire; secure it; or later, withdraw as painlessly as possible. Consequently, the Army in Africa, India and the Middle East developed a form of warfare different, in many respects, from that seen in European wars and digested in *Field Service Regulations*. It was this 'frontier warfare' that produced many of those who rose to senior command or staff positions in the British Army in the Second World War. All of Wingate's experience was gleaned 'out of area', and it was in 'frontier warfare' that he developed as a soldier and a military thinker.

All of Wingate's experience was gleaned 'out of area', and it was in 'frontier warfare' that he developed as a soldier and a military thinker.

One method used extensively in this 'frontier warfare' was small, specialist units, consisting of locally recruited volunteers and existing outside formal 'chains of command', carrying hostilities deep into enemy territory.[v] Britain formed several such units in the inter-war period, the best known being the Anglo-Jewish Special Night Squads raised by Wingate in 1938, during the Palestinian Arab uprising. Wingate carried many of the tactical and training methods of the Night Squads into Ethiopia in 1941. There he was the insurgent, and his principal starting point appears to have been the doctrine for directing armed resistance in Axis occupied territory devised in 1939 by Lieutenant Colonel Colin Gubbins. Gubbins was then with MI(R), and his doctrine was applied in planning for operations inside Ethiopia. Gubbins encapsulated this in two booklets, *The Art of Guerrilla Warfare* and *The Partisan Leader's Handbook*, which were emphatically *not* manuals for 'revolutionary' or 'people's' war, but for paramilitary support operations alongside local partisans supporting offensives by the British Army. Gubbins defined the objective of guerrilla warfare as 'to harass the enemy in every way possible…to such an extent that he is eventually incapable of embarking on a war, or of continuing one…'. He suggested attacking supplies and communications, forcing the enemy to disperse to protect them and thereby become more vulnerable to offensives by regular forces.[vi] This required levels of planning and coordination irregulars might not possess, so British officers should be attached to supervise logistics and provide staff work and technical skills. These should be headed by a 'Chief', a senior British officer familiar with the country and people, heading a 'guerilla [sic] GHQ', identifying and supporting local leaders, supplying the movement, and devising a plan of campaign tied to Allied strategic objectives. Gubbins implied that supplies of weapons and ammunition should be used to control local leaders. Below this, there would be several Operational Centres, mobile outstations of the Mission, attached to districts or larger guerrilla formations.[vii]

Wingate saw these arrangements as inadequate: he wanted to see teams of trained guerrilla warfare specialists from the British

Army prosecute an offensive against enemy communications and garrisons. Why? The answer seems to lie in Wingate's attitude to armed rebellion. He wrote the following shortly after arriving in Burma, but seems to have been thinking of his time in Ethiopia:

> *'When opposing ruthless enemies, such as Japanese or Germans, it is wrong to place any reliance upon the efforts of the individual patriot, however devoted. Brutal and widespread retaliation instantly follows any attempt to injure the enemy's war machine, and, no matter how carefully the sabotage organisation may have been trained for the event, in practice they will find it impossible to operate against a resolute and ruthless enemy…. Essentially a guerrilla soldier is a man who prefers death on his own terms to life on the enemy's. Such were the Rifi in Morocco, and the majority of them were killed; such were the Caucasian Moslem insurgents against the Soviet troops…they were mainly exterminated; such were the Ethiopian guerrillas, who continued to fight for 5 years after the Italian occupation; they were steadily being exterminated when we intervened…'*[viii]

He then argued that if facing counterinsurgents willing to use indiscriminate fire power, exterminate civilians and destroy property in reprisal, insurgents' ties to the population would constrain their freedom of action and thereby their tactical effectiveness.[ix] Moreover, insurgents in practice are rarely as noble as they are in theory: in Gojjam, Wingate encountered three of the staples of armed rebellion in reality, as opposed to 'insurgency', the theoretical construct. Firstly, petty 'warlords', as interested in fighting each other as they were the Italians, and measuring themselves largely by the amount of money, rifles and ammunition they could get from the British. Secondly, 'accidental guerrillas', tribesmen and villagers whose interest began and ended with getting the Italians off their particular piece of turf, and to whom venturing into neighbouring areas to actually attack Italian fortified camps was somewhat counter-intuitive.[x] Thirdly, an obtrusive minority of opportunist bandits, in the form of one gang running a racket by which rifles provided by G(R) to fight the Italians were sold to the highest bidder, including the Italians if they paid enough.[xi] It was because of his experiences in Palestine and Gojjam that Wingate became bitingly – and quotably – cynical about 'People's War': 'We can hope that the rare occasional brave man will be stirred to come to us and risk his life to help our cause – All the rest, the rush of the tribesmen, the peasants with billhooks, is hugaboo.'[xii]

Wingate knew that winning the 'armed struggle' in reality necessitated success in battle, requiring disciplined, well-trained and well-armed professional guerrilla forces

Wingate was specific about how the 'occasional brave man' could be stirred to come forward – emphatically not via methods associated with his distant relative, TE Lawrence. Wingate despised Lawrence: this may be due to the experiences of his relative, General Sir Reginald Wingate, who, as Governor of Egypt, was Lawrence's principal backer in 1917-18, yet was treated harshly by Lawrence in his memoirs.[xiii] Whatever the cause, Wingate was

vitriolic about Lawrence's approach to paramilitary support – issuing weapons, ammunition and money to anyone claiming they would fight, in the hope that they would wage protracted 'People's War' along enemy lines of communication, forcing enemy formations to disperse and breaking their will via frustration and exhaustion.[xiv] Wingate knew that winning the 'armed struggle' in reality necessitated success in battle, requiring disciplined, well-trained and well-armed professional guerrilla forces – the opposite of anarchic tribesmen like Lawrence's Bedouin: 'If you have a just cause you will get support only by appealing to the best in human nature; down at heel spies and pretentious levies are worse than useless'[xv] How to do this was explained in his semi-official 'Appreciation' of the Ethiopia operation:

'On entering the area, the commander gets in touch with the local patriot leader, and after an exhortation, suggests that the leader can do something to help out some operation. The patriot at once replies that he desires nothing better but has no arms…The commander asks how much he wants [and]… promises a fraction which he hands over and waits for results. These are nil….or, possibly, bogus reports of activities this type of commander believes to be true.

The patriot argues thus: "This person evidently needs my… help; so much that he is willing to part with arms he must know I have only the most rudimentary idea of how to use. Ergo, he has no one to fight for him, and so is prepared to give me this substantial bribe. Therefore, he is in a weak position, and may well be beaten. If that happens I shall be in the soup. That is an argument for not fighting, but no argument for not taking what he offers….I think on the whole, that the best and kindest way will be to accept the help with gratitude; to hold it in trust in case some day I can use it safely against the common enemy, and, meanwhile, to get to learn how to use it by settling once and for all that dispute over the water with the Smiths."[xvi]

Simply throwing weaponry at an insurgency can lead to more than just disputes with the Smiths

Simply throwing weaponry at an insurgency can lead to more than just disputes with the Smiths: news emerges at the time of writing that the new Libyan government is sending weapons to the Syrian rebels, including no doubt stocks provided by France and Qatar.[xvii] The huge illegal small arms markets of Pakistan, Africa and Latin America undergo surges in supply and demand following the end of almost every internecine conflict.[xviii] Unsurprising, then, that Wingate banned the unconditional issue of weapons to local irregulars in Ethiopia.[xix] Instead, there should be supervision and leadership by British personnel:

'[C]ease trying to stimulate the revolt from without, using agents, but…enter amongst the patriots small columns of the highest fighting quality, with first class equipment, to perform exploits and to teach self sacrifice and devotion by example instead of by precept. By doing so we should not only fan the revolt to proportions that really threatened the enemy's main bases, but should also assume its direction and control – a most important factor in any future settlement.[xx]

Although Wingate never stated so explicitly, this would ensure that

insurgents pursued British strategic aims. The intended result echoes Libya in 2011:

'[B]y their presence [the regulars] stimulate neighbouring patriot activity. After a few days in a given locality a large but temporary patriot force collects and cooperates with the regular nucleus. The enemy, perpetually harassed, eventually decides on flight, when an opportunity occurs for causing his complete disintegration through air action.[xxi]

Airpower was key, providing a light infantry force deep inside enemy territory with hitting power and logistical support. Forming the Chindits in Burma, Wingate insisted they be supported by organic 'communication aircraft' capable of delivering twenty tons a week over a distance of 300 miles, and that each Chindit column should have Royal Air Force officers attached to coordinate air supply and close air support.[xxii] He later argued that what he was now referring to as Long Range Penetration (LRP) forces could find targets for air attack deep inside enemy territory, allowing air forces 'to make [their] own blow against the widely scattered and invisible enemy effectual.'[xxiii] LRP plus airpower could therefore wage an integrated air-land offensive deep inside hostile territory:

'[Chindit] Columns should not be ordered to exploit strategic bombing unless this is in accordance with the general plan…The Columns are the means by which such exploitation is rendered possible, not that by which it is carried out. Provided the force has gained the upper hand over the enemy…exploitation [of air attacks] will be carried out by the Guerrilla organisation, which will grow as the Force succeeds in imposing its will on the enemy…i.e. RAF cooperation must be aimed to help the Force win the battle…[xxiv]

However, airpower on its own was perhaps less important than the ability of ground forces to summon it, and then exploit its impact. Wingate's air support in Burma came courtesy of the United States Army Air Force First Air Commando. Among the Air Commando's key roles was close air support. From late 1943 it exercised intensively with the Chindits practicing this role. Part of Wingate's plan for the second Chindit operation of 1944 involved drawing Japanese forces into 'killing zones' where they could be pulverised by this organic airpower.[xxv]

However, airpower on its own was perhaps less important than the ability of ground forces to summon it, and then exploit its impact.

As for command and control, Wingate went into greatest detail in a memorandum prepared while forming the Chindits, recommending the placement of a G(R) cell at the headquarters of whatever formation under which the LRP force would operate.[xxvi] This should consist of officers with 'at least some comprehension and previous experience of the special problems they will be expected to solve', in this case, instructors and officers of G(R) rotated through its 'Jungle Warfare School' at Maymyo in Burma, a training centre for British personnel designated to carry out paramilitary support operations alongside guerrillas in China. 'The object should be to use the instructional side of war of penetration as a means of affording change of occupation to officers on operational duty and also to ensure that all instructors

have recent experience of the application of the principles they are teaching.'[xxvii] Wingate outlined more roles for the LRP HQ in his earlier 'Appreciation' from Ethiopia: it should have an 'air cell' and dedicated air support, and other cells responsible for planning and logistics, recruitment and training, liaison with Special Operations Executive and other 'secret services', and propaganda.[xxiix] Propaganda and psychological operations were integral. Wingate argued that penetration forces, without fail, should have a 'doctrine', a political 'message' that military action should send to allies and potential allies in enemy-occupied territory, that British forces were 'on their side': 'The force must operate with a definite propaganda… or creed of war…based on truth, and not lies. Lies are for the enemy. The truth is for our friends.' This 'propaganda or creed of war' would shape the actions of penetration forces right down to the tactical level, affecting planning, preparation, selection of objectives, and the level of cooperation with local guerrillas.[xxix]

Orde Wingate was proposing, therefore, that regular units specialising in operations inside enemy territory alongside local irregulars would bring greater tactical and operational competence, along with the ability to summon air supply and close air support; thereby converting potentially drawn-out and desultory guerrilla warfare into combined-arms operations having swift, decisive strategic effect. What does he teach us in the 21st century? Firstly, how paramilitary support tallies with national strategy: the British had the utmost difficulty maintaining 'plausible deniability' about the SAS in Libya. Conversely the Americans did not even try in Afghanistan and Iraq; a major part of their strategy being to announce that their SOF teams were there to fight the common enemy, an echo of Wingate's 'doctrine'. It might be best to follow the latter example, at least once operations get beyond a certain stage. Secondly, in terms of command, control and supply: simply doling out weapons and money unconditionally runs the risk of their

being misappropriated, as occasional scares about Stinger missiles supplied to the Mujahedeen in the 1980s and still unaccounted for remind us. Having our people on the ground controlling supplies under our terms and conditions gives us a big say in how they are used. Finally, there is the importance of coordination of paramilitary support with other friendly forces in theatre. Another possible issue is burden-sharing and coordination, particularly between Special Forces from some allies and air forces from others. Wingate had the luxury of six months' training with the Air Commando. It may be that Special Forces and airstrike assets from different NATO allies consider more of the same in future, and developments in technology can speed the process.

OVERALL, IF MANAGED CORRECTLY, PARAMILITARY SUPPORT OPERATIONS CAN DELIVER STRATEGIC EFFECT IN A WORLD WHICH APPEARS TO BE GIVING PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEIR APPLICATION.

Overall, if managed correctly, paramilitary support operations can deliver strategic effect in a world which appears to be giving plenty of opportunities for their application. One final quotation from the man himself: '[I]n order to avoid general anarchy, we had better start assembling forces of the type I have described. Their ultimate aim will be to form that coordinating and controlling element which alone will allow us to bring hostilities quickly and finally to a close.'[xxx]

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Positioning the Battalion Commander: the Advance and Pursuit from Awali to Beirut, 6-13 June, 1982

Doron Almog

**The Test of Combat:** *the supreme test of leadership and command.*

To my mind, the most significant and basic rule of leadership was established some 3,000 years ago by Gideon, who said, simply: 'Watch me – and follow my lead' [Judges 7:17].

Adopting this rule obliges commanders to serve as the vanguard: to lead from in front, not behind, and to set a personal example for others to follow. This mode of leadership requires a high level of physical fitness and cognitive ability; high standards of fieldcraft; high levels of courage, self-control and restraint; level-headedness, self-confidence, and the ability to make decisions under pressure.

With respect to tactical command, from the rank of soldier through to elite brigade commander, the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) has indeed adopted Gideon's model. In marked contrast to the British and American armies — which reinforce the role of the corporal or sergeant leading his men — the IDF established a working model of elite officers leading in battle.

Any discussion about the positioning of commanders in the IDF must weigh the cost of their potential loss of life. Just a few of those who have fallen in battle include: Col. Arik Regev, Jordan Valley Brigade commander, killed while pursuing terrorists in the Jordan Valley; Col. Uzi Yairi, Operations Unit Commander, formerly head of the 35th Paratroop Brigade, killed during the Savoy Hotel attack; Lt. Col. Yoni Netanyahu, commander of the elite Israeli army commando unit *Sayeret Matkal* (General Staff Reconnaissance Unit), killed in action during Operation Entebbe in Uganda; Lt. Col. Yossi Tahar, General Staff Officer (GSO), 35th Brigade, during the incursion into southern Lebanon a year before Operation Peace of Galilee, when the force was led in person by Col. Yair Yoram (known as 'Yaya'), commander of what was then the 35th Brigade. The list is far too long to name all those who were killed, ranging in rank from lieutenant colonel to brigadier. All of them lost their lives to protect their people and their country while leading their troops from the front.
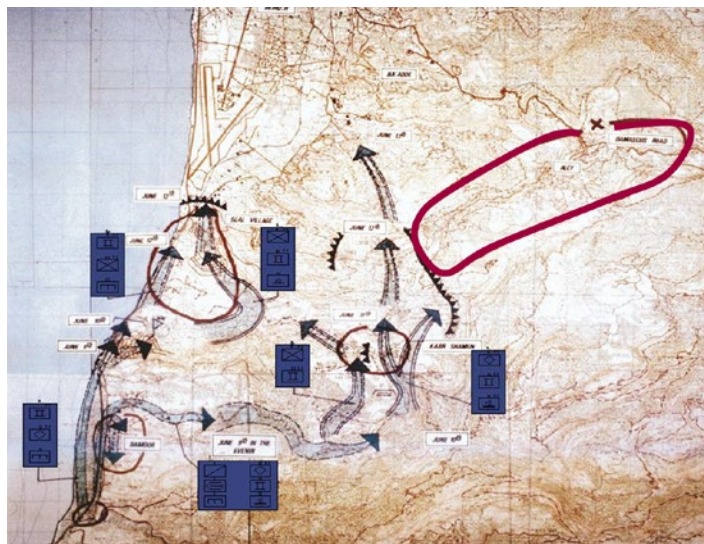
Near-contemporary operations map showing the advance of Israeli forces on the coastal sector, 8-13 June 1982.

The Position of the Commander in Battle: The Advance and Pursuit:

During the first Lebanon War, code-named 'Operation Peace of Galilee', I served as commander to the spearhead force of the 35th Brigade (in the rank of lieutenant colonel) through many stages of the war, from the initial arrival in Awali all the way to Beirut, from the 6th to the 13th of June 1982.

The spearhead force included 3 special units: the Demolitions and Engineering Company, under the command of Captain Yechiel Gozal; the Reconnaissance Company (*sayeret*), under the command of Major Yisrael Ziv; and the *Orev* ('Raven') Anti-Tank Company, under command of Captain Nir Saruf. These were supplemented by a small detachment of tanks (under the command of Lt. Col. Chach), and directly supported (DS) by the 120th and 155th field artillery battalions. In the terminology of the time, this force was known as '*Chasa*' (an acronym of the Hebrew names for the 3 units). Today it is known as the Brigade Reconnaissance Battalion (*gedud hasiyur hachativati*).

The role that a commander assumes within the armed forces essentially begins with the personal decision of each officer.

Over the course of the year before Operation Peace for Galilee was launched, these forces were organized into a unified combat unit, with joint exercises in battle procedures. At that time, I was serving as a commander of the 35th Paratroop Brigade Recruitment Base – the first officer to hold that position after having served as a battalion commander. The role that a commander assumes within the armed forces essentially begins with the personal decision of each officer. His decision reflects his internal voice and inner conscience, telling him clearly where his place must be. My own understanding of a commander's role ultimately led to the decision to form '*Chasa*', as I personally insisted that the forces should be unified into a single military battalion – something which did not exist previously.

The process began with discussions regarding my appointment to the role of commander of the 35th Paratroop Brigade Recruitment Base and the forthcoming military operation. These discussions raised a number of issues regarding logistics and planning for the brigade's operations, and improvising a tactical command group of 23 all ranks. I also insisted on going out on manoeuvres and checking beachfront landing strips together with *Shayetet 13* (the naval commando unit) on April 12th, 1982; 2 months before the Operation commenced.

As a result of this planning, my command post was established directly behind and adjacent to the leading company. That is why I often found myself in the front line, leading the way as we stormed positions or engaged in combat with the enemy. Examples include:

- The night we landed (Sunday, 6th June), while we sought to take control of six houses where terrorists were holed up;

- Destroying ZSU machine guns located near the eastern bridge of the Awali River (this operation was carried out together with Captain Nir Saruf, commander of the Anti-Tank Company) and

then an assault the next morning involving 3 jeeps filled with terrorists;

- Leading the forces as we crossed over a 5 km. stretch along the coastal route, where a terrorist group had taken cover;

- Encountering the wounded of the 890th Battalion and the 50th Battalion at Ras Nebi Yunis (Monday, June 7th);

- Leading the forces crossing the town of Damour;

- Heading up the counter-attack on a terrorist ambush 6 km. east of Damour, together with Major Israel Ziv, who was in charge of the Reconnaissance (Wednesday, 9th June);

- Directing the way as we outflanked and attacked the terrorists lying in ambush in Kfar Matta, together with Captain Yechiel Gozal, commander of the Demolitions and Engineering Company (Thursday, 10th June); or

- Outflanking the Syrian forces stationed at the Tomb of Shamon (Kaber Shamon) near Shemlan (Friday and Saturday, 11th-12th June).

Wed 9, June, 1982 – Northern Command Order Group near Damur. Attending from right to left: Brig. General Amos Yaron (glasses on his head), divisional commander; Lt. Col. Yossi Morag (Tchach), Tank Battalion Commander (no ranks on his shoulders); Major General Amir Drori, GOC Northern Command; Lt. Col. Doron Almog (closest to camera, with no ranks on shoulders), spearhead unit commander and the writer of this article.

I generally set up the command post and tactical headquarters directly behind the leading company, and I moved to the front line as soon as fighting began. Brigadier Yair Yoram (Yaya), leading the 35th Brigade, established his command post on high ground, behind the first battalion, to provide the best observation out to 5 km. During the terrorist ambush at Kfar Matta (June 10th), when I was with my own command post adjacent to the Demolitions and Engineering Company, it was Yaya who gave me the vital information I needed about what was happening above, which assisted in my decision to dispatch the Reconnaissance to the northern flank.

In another instance, during the battle at Shemlan (on Saturday, 12th June), the command post actually joined the front line of the Anti-Tank Company after its officer, Lt. Yochi (Yochanan) Geva, fell in battle. Because of the nature of the terrain, heavily built up

and wooded, it was extremely difficult to maintain visual contact between the different Companies. On the other hand, it required close cooperation between all three companies, each stationed at different elevations, at parallel points to each other. The Anti-Tank Company was at the lowest level along the main axis, the Demolitions and Engineering Company was stationed on the edge of the mountain, some 100 m. east of them and above the main axis, while the Reconnaissance Company was located on the mountain ridge east of the Engineering Company.

In another instance the command post actually joined the front line of the Anti-Tank Company after its officer fell in battle.

The Anti-Tank Company, stationed at the lowest elevation, dealt with clearing away an exploding, burning enemy tank that was blocking the passage of our armoured vehicles. They did this by engaging the Syrian forces that were shooting at it from the Junction. In these circumstances, I chose to integrate my command post with the Demolitions and Engineering Company stationed above the Anti-Tank Company, in order to outflank the Syria forces that were shooting at both the Anti-Tank Company and other friendly forces which were advancing towards the Junction.

When Yochi Geva was killed in action, the Anti-Tank Company which he had led suffered a great deal of confusion, lacking direction. Consequently, the command posts of both deputy brigade commander Lt. Col. Arik Krausman and Brigade commander Col. Yaya joined the Anti-Tank Company to facilitate the advance on the main axis. It should be noted that every command post and tactical headquarters, whether manned by a battalion or a compnay commander, was not intended merely as a place where leaders issue and receive orders and make command decisions from a safe distance, out of contact. Rather, command posts were intended to serve as fighting forces for offensive and defensive manoeuvres in conjunction with other units. My own tactical headquarters was designed that way, as were the others.

For the command group to successfully oversee all the companies at every stage of the operation, it was important to select appropriate observation positions and decide how to advance between them. It is also worth mentioning that initial operational planning related specifically only to the initial beachfront landing and securing the northern ridge. That night, deputy brigade commander Lt. Col. Arik Krausman integrated his command post into the Demolitions and Engineering Company; which was the first fighting unit to land, in 10 rubber dinghies, on the Awali beachfront, behind the Naval Commandos. The fact that the command post joined my battalion at such an early and sensitive point of the operation was intended to ensure a high-ranking presence within the campaign (integrating naval, air and ground forces) right at the initial stages of landing, deployment and initial combat. After that initial landing, the brigade commander's headquarters was set up on higher ground, on the mountain range near the university and north of the landing site.

The timing, placement and integration of command posts as the unit advanced northward were implemented as movement occurred, and decisions on when and where to advance were made and carried out in real time.

Left: Sunday, June 13, 1982, near Beirut, Lt Col. Doron Almog
Right: Friday, 11 June 1982, near Kaber Shmun – downside –
Lt. Col. Doron Almog and Lt col. Yossi Morag.

Summary

The model of command which characterized the 35th Paratroop Brigade during the advance from Awali to Beirut was that of leadership integrated within the fighting units. This may be evidenced by the number of officers who fell in battle: almost exactly a third of the total casualties.

In the four month period from the June 6th landing at Awali through to October 11th, 1982, the landing force lost 40 personnel. Of those, 17 were officers, the senior of whom was Major Dudu Cohen, deputy commander of the 890th Battalion, who fell in the assault on Kaber Shamon on June 11. The first week of fighting had a similar outcome: between June 6th and 13th, the force lost 32 personnel; 12 were officers.

Chasa, the spearhead force that I headed, lost two commanders between June 6th and 13th. Both were team leaders: First Lieutenant Alon Levin, a commander in the Reconnaissance Company, who was killed in the battle over Kaber Shamon on June 11th; and Lieutenant Yochi Geva, who fell in the battle over Shemlan on June 12th. Captain Yechiel Gozal, commander of the Demolitions and Engineering Company, was wounded during an exchange of fire with Syrian commandos while leading the team conducting a sweep through houses in the town's eastern road. Gozal was later decorated for extraordinary personal bravery, demonstrated during the clearance of some 80 mines and explosives which blocked the eastern exit from the town of Damour.

In the 7 days of the advance *Chasa* killed more than 150 terrorists and Syrian commandos; destroyed more than 30 enemy AFVs (including tanks and APCs); and captured more than 20 terrorists and Syrian fighters. Over several days, the method of operations of *Chasa* (the spearhead force) served as the inspiration for the establishment of a permanent, unified Reconnaissance Battalion consisting of all three companies.

Mastering warfare is not an exact science. The IDF's guidelines state that a commander must be positioned so as to best influence the battlefield. The model of command from amongst the troops – adopted all the way up the ranks, even to the regimental commander – has become one of the IDF's inalienable assets. This model enables the commander to get an accurate assessment of the situation in the field, without waiting for intermediaries. This direct linkage enables

the commander to see for himself what is really happening on the inside, in real time. The placement inside the unit also enables the tactical commander to **get the best possible information in as short a time as possible**, regarding several critical factors: the position of the enemy; the welfare of his own forces; the terrain; morale; exhaustion and battle fatigue; and all the 'other factors' that fall under the heading of situation assessment.

Mastering warfare is not an exact science.

During moments of crisis or critical times during battle, the appearance of the commander in the midst of the fighting **serves as an inspiring personal example**. This instils renewed energy in the soldiers and officers, and can actually turn defeat into victory. There is a perceived element of danger and threat to the commander's safety when he is located in the midst of the units, but my personal experience has taught me that there is no guarantee or immunity for those who remain outside the fray, in the rear of the fighting. My gut feeling is that, generally speaking, the safest place is actually at the front of the troops; it is also easiest to influence battlefield developments, and to do so quickly and accurately.

The aim of the battle is to achieve victory. The element of surprise in combat is important, perhaps even a fundamental component, in achieving victory. The fearless commander who positions himself in

the midst of the battle can integrate fighting with assessing tactical conditions. This means that the process of intelligent decision-making is based on accurately identifying the enemy's position, activity and status on the battlefield. This knowledge can be used to surprise the enemy both in contact and during the advance and pursuit; something that we did during the course of a full week of fighting from Awali to Beirut, an advance of 70 Km.

In point of fact, when there is prolonged engagement with the enemy they are aware of our presence in the field, **but it remains possible and necessary to surprise the enemy at all times**. That may be by choosing a particular route of advance and attack; by gauging the strength of enemy return fire and counterattacks; or by the integration of our highly-trained and motivated forces into a single, unified operation. The reality of the situation was that Lebanon's built-up and mountainous terrain region did not allow for a massive concentration of force. But the possibility of proceeding on foot enabled us to advance in a parallel fashion even in areas with limited navigability, by utilizing the strength of the assigned companies: tanks; artillery; engineering; reconnaissance and anti-tank warfare. This capacity made it possible for us to surprise the enemy in almost every engagement and advance, and to upset the balance of power even in the early stages of the operation.

The opportunity to conduct the kind of operations which we carried out during the 70 Km. advance from Awali to Beirut was, to a great extent respect, a result of the model of **command from in front and within**. This model we followed was just as Gideon established more than 3,000 years ago: 'Watch me – and follow my lead'.

Major General Doron Almog works at the Israeli Prime Minister's office, leading a special national task force to improve the status of Bedouins in the south of Israel.

THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF WAR DOES NOT EXIST

William F. Owen

The premise of this article is laid out in the title. This article will assert that the 'operational level of war' is a fallacy built on a failure to understand historical teaching on strategy and tactics.[i]

THE 'OPERATIONAL LEVEL OF WAR' IS A FALLACY BUILT ON A FAILURE TO UNDERSTAND HISTORICAL TEACHING ON STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The reason why the idea of an operational level of war is not fit for purpose is that it has attempted to create an artificial and flawed linkage between strategy and tactics. This has had two negative effects. First it has denigrated and marginalised tactics. Second, it has undermined the correct understanding of strategy.

Origins

The origins of the operational level of war are problematic, as is its definition. The two problems are closely related. The idea of an operational level asserts that there is a 'level of war,' between strategy and tactics. Prior to this, tactics was the conduct of battles and engagements, while strategy was the use of battles and engagements for the purposes of the war.[ii] In other words, while tactics won battles, strategy won the war by removing the enemies armed forces' ability to counter or object to the political condition or behaviour which the opposing force sought. Defeat in battle or in war had two basic conceptions. The first was that the enemy

suffered such harm or destruction that he was either unwilling or unable to continue. Secondly, he gave up the fight due to either physical, psychological or political exhaustion. This was, and is, the difference between annihilation and exhaustion.

Thus the definitions of strategy and tactics were and are simple, coherent and highly workable. While armies conducted 'operations', such activity did not impinge on the delineation of strategy and tactics. Conducting operations did not an operational level of war make!

The operational level of war is strongly associated with Soviet military thought. A.A. Svechin is often seen as the originator of the idea, when he discussed 'Operational Art' (operativnoe iskustvo) as conceptual connection between tactics and strategy.[iii] He defined an operation as 'the effort of troops directed towards the achievement of a certain intermediate goal in a certain theatre of military operations without interruptions.'[iv] In the very next sentence he went on to explain that operations were designed to destroy or encircle a portion of the enemy forces to force a withdrawal of other forces, to capture or hold a 'certain line or geographical area.' Destroying a portion of the enemy's armies is what battles traditionally sought to do. Svechin's description equates strongly with battle and thus tactics, at least in terms of the outcome described.

Much Soviet and Russian writing (and Western analysis of it) on the Operational Level of War is, once subject to rigour, paper-thin and mostly a sophistry that arbitrarily creates a false and unneeded link between strategy and tactics. The extremely high losses suffered by Soviet Forces in WW2 are not symptomatic of anything other than bad tactics poorly executed. If the acme of operational art is encirclement operations, then at what level of command does this operational level of war take place? A platoon can encircle an enemy section, just as much as an army group can encircle an enemy army.

What Svechin struggled with seems to be what Lieutenant General Edward Hamley (and others) was able to articulate simply and

clearly in his 1866 work 'Operations of War'. Using recent historical examples, Hamley laid out the things it was advisable or essential to do to defeat an enemy force within a theatre. In his work, Hamley used the word 'strategical' to enunciate those actions that would lead to the enemy's defeat within the theatre of operations.[v] 'Strategical' meant 'Strategy.' Strategical did not sit between strategy and tactics. In this sense, Hamley was merely concerned with defeating the enemy within a theatre, as in 'winning campaigns', because in general terms this is what won wars. Tactics were planned and executed as 'Operations'. Strategies (a specific strategy) were planned and executed as 'Campaigns'. Unlike Clausewitz, Hamley simply took it as read that the defeat of the enemy would achieve the desired policy. He assumed that the policy was always one that would succeed once the enemy was defeated. Clausewitz cautioned that only certain policies could succeed once the enemy was defeated, and that this realisation was critical. Regardless of this, the point is that Hamley's, like Clausewitz's, understanding of strategy is far superior to what we see today, in terms of clarity, accuracy and application. He knew that armed forces could only deliver military force against an enemy, whose defeat would deliver the political conditions required. How you destroyed or defeated the enemy within a theatre was the only thing armed forces were required to consider; albeit also having to deliver that defeat or destruction in ways and at a reasonable cost, in terms of what the government, public and wider international community would accept. The multi-national Crimean Campaign (October 1853 – February 1856), in which Hamley served, was a notable failure in that respect. What success was gained came at far too high a cost, certainly for the British public.

Strategy and tactics required no linkage, because both were inextricably linked by virtue of their nature.

The critical point here is that prior to Svechin seeking to arbitrarily construct 'the operational level of war,' operations were normally conducted as part of a campaign, to defeat the enemy within a theatre, without any recognition this was somehow linking strategy with tactics. Strategy and tactics required no linkage, because both were inextricably linked by virtue of their nature. There was no ambiguity in the clear and simple guidance which that delivered. Based on that, there is simply no need to talk about an operational level of war, because all military action required the skilful planning and conduct of operations; being essential to tactical victory creating strategic success.

Tactics

One of the real problems with the operational level of war is tying down exactly what it means. In this regard it is worth asking where tactics, as in fighting, ends and the 'operational level of war' begins. Tactics is usually taught and practised in relation to a level of command. Thus, there are manuals and doctrine on platoon, company, battle group and formation tactics. Though more rare, publications for divisional tactics have existed. How divisions co-operate to defeat the enemy is also the realm of tactics, though almost never committed to paper, by virtue of their very limited readership.

If some wish to supposed that 'Grand Tactics' is synonymous with the 'operational level' then this would further associate tactics with a level of command, thus tactics. Tactics covers every form of joint activity as well. If someone wants to re-label tactics above or below Division as 'the operational level' then this is merely re-naming something for the sake of fashion. There should be a clear logical flow from platoon to division and even beyond, as to how any level of command employs its subordinate levels to win battles and engagements. Eventually the level of command becomes strategic, as in 'those actions that defeat the enemy within the theatre'.

However, regardless of the level of command it is entirely possible to win battles and lose wars. Supposedly the 'operational level of war' is the key to avoiding this. Again this misunderstands the correct use and meaning of the words 'strategy' and 'tactics'. For example, much writing on the 'operational level of war' concerns 'sequencing battles and engagements.' This is to ensure that success in one engagement contributes to success in the next. The idea is to keep winning battles until you have won the war, and/or defeated the enemy within the theatre. While sequencing battles and engagements requires commanders to plan and conduct operations, this is actually the realm of tactics.

Napoleon and Hannibal were both extremely good at winning battles. That required both commanders to plan and conduct operations. None of those things saved them from being very bad at strategy. Hannibal could simply not defeat Roman legions quicker than Rome could generate new legions, and not at a cost of his own forces that was likely to see the Roman will to fight break before that of his own forces. Thus he was defeated. Napoleon consistently failed to turn winning battles into sustainable strategic success. Greater skill in the conduct of operations would not and did not help, because it is impossible to divide operations from tactics. For example, Marshal D'Erlon's failure to destroy Blucher's Army at Ligny was a failure of tactics, in that he failed to destroy the Prussian Army as the outcome of the battle. Had the French planned and executed a pursuit, they would have been more likely to attain the level of tactical outcome required. Destruction of the Prussian Army was strategically essential. Good tactics is what sequences battles and engagements, and strategy can only be done as tactics. Armies are destroyed or defeat by tactics. Wars are won and lost by strategy.

History does not show us that operational art, or even the operational level of war, is a necessary linking mechanism between tactical victory and strategic success. For example, the failure of the German 'Operation Michael' in March 1918 saw initially high levels of tactical success fail miserably once the attacking infantry advanced out of the range of their own guns and beyond their own logistic support. Advancing too fast and failing to sustain an advance is a failure of tactics. Going beyond the range of your supporting artillery and being unable to move the artillery is a failure of knowing how to fight battles and engagements. Clearly, the operation was both badly planned and badly conducted. Operations cannot succeed without tactical success. Nor can tactics succeed if operations are badly planned and conducted. Decisive tactical victory requires good planning and conduct. The fact that the Germans never clearly defined what the tactics were supposed to achieve as concerns the conduct of the campaign was another obvious failing. It is useful to understand that to Clausewitz 'victory' was only ever a tactical concept. You used victories to win wars. In terms of victory being 'decisive', this meant not only that the enemy's will to persist had been broken, but that yours had not. For example, while Blucher 'broke contact' at Ligny, he and the Prussian Army remained ready to fight.

Core Functions and Strategical Movements

How to win battles and not lose wars were something which 19th and early 20th century military theorists gave a great deal of thought to. Pre-eminent amongst them was Clausewitz, whose book 'On War' was substantially concerned with just that question. Sadly, while an outstanding work in many ways, and arguably one that has yet to be improved upon, Clausewitz was not always able to articulate himself as clearly as we might wish for today's reader. Luckily, Clausewitz had at least two very able disciples. Hamley has already been mentioned, but not Foch.

Although Ferdinand Foch ended the First World War as the Supreme Allied Commander, his 1918 book 'The Principles of War' was based on his Staff College lectures of 1903 written as a Lieutenant Colonel.

Foch cites Frederick the Great in articulating the need for all tactical actions and engagements to gain a decision, or else be fruitless. 'In war, so long as something remains to be done, nothing is done.'[vi] Thus if anyone talked about 'sequencing battles and engagements', the Prussians would have dismissed such a statement as banal and obvious.

In his chapter 'The Battle: Decisive Attack,' Foch lays out the simple truth that tactical victory is meaningless unless it contributes to strategic success. Thus tactical victory is defined by its contribution to strategic success, thus strategy. Given that, the operational level of war's function of providing a means to connect strategy with tactics is utterly redundant and based on fallacious understanding of tactics. Svechin was clearly poorly read on this subject.

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Today, UK and most US or Commonwealth army doctrine contains the Core Functions of Find, Fix, Strike and Exploit.[vii] These can be traced to Foch's guidance as to campaign planning when he laid out the methodology using those functions.[viii] The critical part, missed by most, is the contribution of 'Exploitation'. Without it, all else is meaningless; since it is the act of exploitation that logically sequences or connects tactical success in one engagement with another. The Core Functions exist to ensure that tactical victory leads to strategic success, and can be applied by every level of command within the theatre. Again, there is no need for an operational level of war.

Hamley also formulated some complimentary guidance for campaign planning where he suggests:

'strategical movements will be considered as having the following objectives,

1st To menace or assail the enemy's communications with his base;

2nd To destroy the coherence and concerted actions of his army, by breaking the communications which connect the parts;

3rd To effect superior concentrations on particular parts.'[ix]

It would seem likely that if you can do those things, and do them at acceptable cost, you may well defeat the enemy within the theatre of operations. Rigorous historical research tends to confirm this. Of note, Hamley's book 'Operations of War' was specifically about the planning, execution and sustaining of 'strategical movements'; as being those actions which defeated the enemy within a theatre. Again, given sound understanding of strategy and tactics, the operational level of war is utterly redundant.[x]

It should also be noted that Clausewitz, Foch, Hamley and many others were, unlike Svechin, not seeking to be original or radical. They were merely recording what history showed to be true. To them, military history was evidence of an objective truth as to what created success and failure in war. In contrast, Svechin was seeking to radically reform the new Red Army, which had notably failed to defeat the Polish Army in 1920. He probably viewed the idea of the operational level of war as a suitable glove puppet with which to create some form of campaign planning.

Modern History?

Why is the operational level of war so alluring? Many modern military theorists and historians still seem to struggle with strategy and tactics to a degree where even if the operational level of war had merit, it would still fail to provide the function it claimed.

For example, the US withdrawal from Somalia in 1993 as a result of the 'Blackhawk Down' battle was a strategic failure caused by bad tactics, which accumulated losses which were too high for US policy to sustain. Greater tactical skill or better decisions would have resulted in fewer casualties, for such success as there was. Yet amazingly, many writers continue to assert this was a 'US tactical victory.' Where was the operational level in Somalia? Somali militias just had to kill enough Americans for the Americans to give up the fight. That number turned out to be surprisingly low.

The number of US dead in the Vietnam War was substantially higher, and enough to break the will of the US Government and Congress to persist in military action. Tactical victories failed to deliver at a low enough cost in dead to be relevant to strategic success as relevant to the policy. Of particular note in Vietnam, the US failed to successfully implement Hamley's guidance to 'menace or assail the enemy's communications with his base'!

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Popular military history (and especially regimental or unit histories) constantly fail to recognise that outstanding courage and sacrifice are not the same as good tactics. It could even be said that, if you have to resort to courage and sacrifice, tactical skill is lacking. More often than not, heroism gets advanced to cover up poor tactical conduct. Thus the understanding of what creates successful tactics is largely absent from a lot of modern doctrine. With confusion as to tactics, something called the 'operational level of war' seems alluring. It might even be suggested that commanders are drawn to

describing themselves as working at the operational level, because it allows them to avoid responsibility for bad tactics.

The US success in Desert Storm in 1991 was achieved by employing the planning and ideas inherent in centuries of strategy and tactics and which would have seemed obvious to commanders such as Sherman, Foch and Allenby. An 'operational level of war' is meaningless in terms of the tactical successes which caused the strategic collapse of the Iraqi Army in 1991. Being able to move from one decisive battle or engagement to the next, or move armies and formations in mutual support of each other, is the realm of strategy and tactics.[xi] That movement and conduct has to be planned, sustained and executed, and may be done so as an operation or plan. If you win a battle, having run out of fuel or ammunition and having sustained too many casualties, you did so due to bad tactics and you are probably failing more than succeeding.

This is evident in irregular warfare or when fighting insurgents engaging in armed rebellion, where the defeat of a rebel force usually requires the killing and capture of the rebels. The same campaign planning tools that enable the defeat of regular armed forces deliver the same in fighting irregulars.[xii] It is thus not surprising that many theorists have failed to find or explain an operational level of war in counter-insurgency when, as this article has shown, the existence of an operational level of war is highly contestable.

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Good tactics are those that advance you towards strategic success. Bad tactics lose too many lives, fail to gain a decision (that is, be decisive) and thus do not make a contribution to strategic success.

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At best, it would appear that the operational level of war is just an odd articulation of the need to be good at tactics; something Svechin and those who chose to promote his ideas failed to understand. Sadly, it seems more likely that those who advanced the idea of the operational level of war have done so while being ignorant as to what the terms 'strategy' and 'tactics' really mean. Tactics are planned and executed as operations. If those tactics remove the enemy as the armed objector to the political condition or behaviour sought, at reasonable cost, then the strategy is successful. Why make it more complicated?

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[i] The author is indebted to Justin Kelly and James Brennan for the insights contained in their work, Alien: How Operational Art Devoured Strategy.

[ii] These are the definitions that Clausewitz suggested.

[iii] Strategy, A.A Svechin (1927), 1997 East View Publications, Page 68.

[iv] More famously Svechin is often quoted as saying "Tactics make the steps from which operational leaps are assembled; strategy points out the path'. It seems entirely fair to point out that leaps and steps are strongly related as in being degrees of basically the same activity, while strategy is described as something utterly distinct.

[v] Operations of War, Hamley, 1909 edition, Page 65.

[vi] Principles of War, Foch, 1918 English Edition, Page 282.

[vii] In 2010, UK Doctrine re-labelled the Core Functions as the 'Tactical Framework', demonstrating ignorance of their use and intent.

[viii] Page 46-47 Foch ibid

[ix] Page 66 Hamley ibid

[x] On Page 399 of the 1909 edition of 'Operations of War', Hamley makes it clear that strategy and tactics are so closely related as to be inextricable, and then goes on to use Clausewitz's definitions as to why.

[xi] 'Marching and Reconnaissance are as much a part of strategy as tactics.' Carl von Clausewitz, On War, Book Five, Chapter 18.
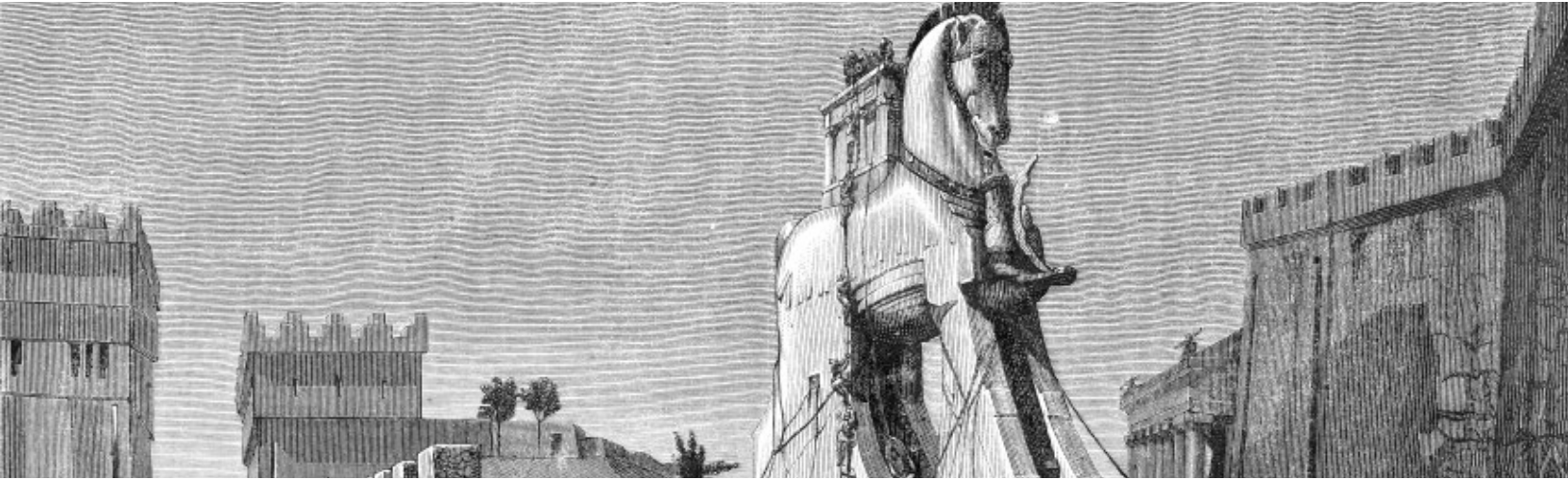
[xii] For a wider discussion of this issue, see:
      Owen, William F., 'Killing Your Way to Control', British Army Review, Spring 2011;
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The Continuing Relevance of Military Denial and Deception

Adam Elkus

Military denial and deception (D&D) have a long and storied history in military operations, but D&D is also an integral part of current and future operations. This analysis offers an overview of D&D, a look at D&D in past and present military operations, and some predictions for how future D&D will be a part of future military scenarios. New technologies will offer new opportunities for deception and information denial, but the core of D&D is its most vulnerable target: the human mind. A look at D&D in military history—ancient and contemporary—sheds light on its successes and limitations.

Explaining D&D

In simplest terms, military denial and deception can be explained through the two frames of *simulation* and *dissimulation*. To dissimulate is to *hide the real*, and to simulate is to *reveal the fake*. Denial, whether through tactical concealment or security operations, hides military capabilities and intentions from the opponent's gaze. Deception creates a false image through the usage of camouflage, decoying, false documents, and other time-tested tools of military fakery. The two are symbiotic and cannot be divorced from each other. By controlling the channels by which an opponent receives information through information denial, deception can be readily achieved by feeding him false information.[i] Even better, denial reduces information channels which opponents can readily access, making them more willing to trust channels which the deceiver controls.

Though today's technologies for D&D are novel, D&D as a technique is most certainly not. So why D&D? Military operations involve the

ultimate risk: death or severe injury. Commanders from ancient times onwards have sought to use denial to reduce the risk of harm to themselves and deception to shift the costs of war on to their opponents. Good D&D minimizes harm and risk to one's own forces and amplifies the effect of force against the enemy. Because of these effects, and the consistent vulnerability of the human mind, D&D is as old as warfare itself.

Like logistics, D&D is a niche subject that is nonetheless essential to the use of the military art to achieve strategic effect. A review of D&D in military history and current operations can help better reveal its utility and limitations for both analysts and practitioners, while pointing the way toward D&D in future warfare. D&D is timeless, and thus will always have value. However, such value must be qualified to be of use to the practitioner.

Deception in military history is much-studied: the classically-trained reader is familiar with the Trojan Horse, and the religious reader much more so with Gideon's use of misinformation, trumpets, pitchers, and torches to overawe the Midianites. Jon Latimer has also written about the use of military deception by historical figures ranging from Hittite enemies of Ramses II in 1294 BC to Coalition planners in the 1991 Gulf War.[ii] The complex British and American D&D operation that enabled Normandy campaign is famous in the annals of military history. Less famous but equally impressive is the Soviet information effort that helped it to destroy the German Army Group Center in 1944 during Operation Bagration.

Denial in and of itself, however, while equally ancient and storied, does not receive much attention. This is a shame, since many historic failures can be at least partially explained by a failure to control information. If the proper authorities in Jericho, to continue the biblical analogy, had exercised proper counterintelligence (CI), the city's weakness would not have been telegraphed to the Israelites. Joshua's invasion plan, which hinged on sensitive political intelligence about the morale of Jericho's defenders, would have been foiled if

proper information denial had been utilized. Furthermore, good CI work could have 'turned' Rahab into a double agent capable of running deception operations against the Israelites.

The Trojan Horse deception operation would have been similarly foiled if one of Ulysses' men had, in a moment of drunken revelry, had voiced candid comments about the deception plan to audiences with malicious motives. Deception in history is glamorous, but the need for proper OPSEC is recognized only when disaster occurs. The famous World War II posters declaring that 'loose lips sink ships' is indeed a backhanded tribute to denial's importance. Regardless of its neglect, any thorough review of military history reveals proper denial as the element that enables a successful military operation. It should be cautioned, though, that failures of denial are only meaningful if successfully exploited by the enemy. General Robert E. Lee's orders may have fallen into Union hands, but Union commanders lacked the military skill to capitalize on Confederate misfortune in the battle of Antietam.

How does one plan denial and deception? Michael Bennett and Edward Waltz's book *Counterdeception: Principles and Applications for National Security* is by far the most comprehensive work on D&D. Bennett and Waltz summarize deception planning as a cycle that begins with an objective achieved by methods of *concealing facts* and *receiving fiction*. These methods exploit a target's psychological or organizational vulnerabilities, or dependence on certain information sources. Deception effects are achieved by influencing the target's reconstruction of the deception story, data and information collection, fusion, and interpretation. The ultimate aim of the deception operation is to negatively effect the target's decisions and actions. Effects that can be achieved range from acting at the wrong time and place to the delaying of crucial military action.[iii]

While D&D in war is intended to maximize surprise, D&D in peacetime settings seek to conceal capabilities or provide competitive political advantage.

D&D takes place at numerous levels of engagement. At the tactical level, military D&D relies on concealment, security, feints, and other elementary tools. On the operational and strategic levels, D&D primarily targets military staffs and government bureaucrats. While D&D in war is intended to maximize surprise, D&D in peacetime settings seek to conceal capabilities or provide competitive political advantage.[iv]

It is important, however, to qualify the effect of D&D. D&D, at most, *amplifies* the effects of military action. It was armor, artillery, aircraft, and the infantryman's cold steel that forced German troops aside at Normandy, not a clever deception planner. Moreover, deception operations depend implicitly on the target being able to reconstruct a deception story in the manner that the planner chooses. Whether or not the enemy complies is beyond the operational control of the deception planner.

Operational and strategic surprise, when achieved, can lower the cost of war. But the exceptional nature of campaigns such as 1941's Operation Barbarossa or the smashing Israeli surprise strike in 1967

also cannot be ignored. For every successful campaign there are many more failed attempts or successes with ephemeral strategic effects. Israel may have been surprised in 1973, but it was able to reverse the military situation and take its military forces inside both Egyptian and Syrian territory.

Deception *in and of itself* cannot guarantee lasting effects. In fact, it can frequently backfire. The cumulative impact of Saddam Hussein's numerous deceptions regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) enabled his overthrow, and Iran's deception operations laid the grounds for the country's current geopolitical woes.

D&D as an Integral Element of Current Operations

At first glance the idea of D&D may seem charmingly anachronistic. How is it possible to fool opponents with modern sensors? But the technological dependence of modern militaries is precisely what enables lesser opponents to fool them with deceptions that exploit intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR) and data processing equipment. The common perception that such gadgets are infallible is a deception planner's best asset.

The Kosovo War was a testbed for emerging theories of information dominance on the battlefield. Unfortunately, Kosovo showed that opposing forces could handily fool Allied ISR. The Serbs hid their weapons by mixing their military convoys with civilian caravans, and drew Allied fire with fake bridges and elaborate decoys that simulated artillery, anti-aircraft missile launchers, and even fighter aircraft. Allied reliance on overhead reconnaissance for battle damage assessment, the overtasking of imagery analysts, NATO's self-imposed bombing altitude restrictions, and Kosovo's unique terrain all made Allied forces more susceptible to D&D.[v]

D&D's relevance is also undoubtedly challenged by a 24-hour news media increasingly fed by social media and mobile devices. But an information-hungry global media also enables effective D&D. While most are familiar with the propaganda tactic of taking foreign reporters to see real or simulated civilian casualties, the media can also be leveraged for D&D. Saddam Hussein, denied access to his most useful means of ISR, came to depend on CNN for information about the conflict. But CNN was scrubbed of useful information through tight Pentagon operations security and mostly filled with Coalition press statements. Hussein's reliance on the media, coupled with extensive physical deception measures, hid the ground war's main effort and decoyed the Iraqis away from the Coalition's 'left hook' in the west.[vi]

Surprise attacks by irregular armies from the People's Liberation Army of Vietnam to the Taliban have utilized denial and deception to defeat both human intelligence and expensive technical collection platforms. That some of these surprise attacks have been mounted despite forewarning and knowledge of enemy tactics is a proof that irregular actors do not slouch at D&D.

D&D in Future Warfare

D&D is likely to play an important role in future warfare. In the emerging field of cyber operations and tactics, military computer networks can further deception by manipulating attackers' perceptions. Even though enemy hackers might 'own' the network, defenders still have physical control and can use deception to give attackers a false sense of their military capabilities. And by making one network seem more attractive than it actually is, deception can

also protect other networks from harm. Offensive cyber operations also can help D&D efforts by disabling enemy ISR systems through cyberattack or corrupting systems to help the enemy see what the attacker wants.[vii]

The Marine Corps Amphibious Capabilities Working Group has also noted that D&D holds the key to overcoming 'anti-access/area denial' threats. The report notes that a 'battle of the signatures' is dawning. Denial—the reduction of visual, electromagnetic, thermal, hyper-spectral, audible and informational signatures—and deception are necessary for executing modern amphibious operations. In an environment congested by layered networks of enemy sensors, D&D would protect tactical and operational surprise while distracting, decoying, demonstrating, feinting, or simulating in order to draw enemy attention. Only then can operational maneuver, which avoids enemy hardpoints, be achieved.[viii]

Technology has always been an integral part of deception operations, in large part because aerial photoreconnaissance, radar, and other sensors of the early 20th century vintage substantially bolstered the ability of the defense to detect offensives. Encounter battles still occur despite technological know-how, as the confusion during the ground phases of both 1991 and 2003 Iraq wars demonstrated. 'Systems of systems' have not, in any way, reduced the fog of war. The fog of war's character, however, is substantially different. The kinds of encounter battles and surprise offensives fought from Alexander to the Franco-Prussian War are largely not possible today because of the immense increase in ISR and data fusion methods. These sensors must be thwarted or fooled in order to protect one's own forces from conventional attack.

New technical means will also transform deception operations. First, the increasing diversity of sensors and media on multiple levels of engagement will present more means of executing deception. But more immediately useful to the military practitioner are emerging advances in materials science and nanoscience, electromagnetic technologies, information and quantum sciences, and better understandings and practical applications of psychology, biology, and the computational social sciences. Some of these technologies will make denial harder, such as small mobile and self-replicating sensor networks that can reach even denied targets. But advances in plasma and directed energy technologies can also potentially allow remote probing and exploitation, enabling an active decoy attack on the enemy.[ix] Robotics also have been employed since the 1980s Israeli air operations in Lebanon for the purpose of deception.

The technological dimension is only one half of the emerging operational dimension. There is a distinct reason why D&D and deception will be attractive to *both* Western militaries and their opponents. It is axiomatic that the weak thwart rather than overmatch the strong. The West's militaries, once strong, are suffering fiscal losses and losing key personnel as drawdowns occur. Populations are growing tired of war, and expensive key platforms are aging without viable replacements on the horizon. As such, the warfare of the weak and strong may converge.

From the end of the Cold War onwards, Western militaries have rightly assumed that military competitors would attempt to disguise their power and deceive to draw attention away from their real capabilities and intentions. Moreover, the West's enemies also are frequently authoritarian states for whom cheating and deception is basic political behavior. The attractiveness of deception operations and capabilities to opponents ranging from Mao's China to Saddam Hussein's Iraq provides empirical support for this prejudice.

But democracies are also capable of information manipulation and deception. The United States was able to exercise remarkable control over information in the 1991 Gulf War, not only shaping the media coverage's tenor, but also protecting secrets. It is true that America cannot do so today in regards to its remotely piloted vehicle ('drone') program and its cyber operations in Iran. But while this demonstrates the difficulty of conducting D&D in democracies, it is not proof that D&D is impossible.

Now that the West has become fiscally weaker and weary of war, denial and deception will be crucial to engaging and destroying both conventional and irregular forces. Currently, the United States is employing special operations forces, paramilitary intelligence capabilities, and regular air and sea military platforms to acquire and target al-Qaeda affiliated groups in Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia. Information denial is key to this campaign, lest press leaks alert al-Qaeda to ongoing operations. The US reliance on human intelligence also presents opportunities for adversary deception operations, like the Jordanian double agent who executed a hit against an American spy base in Khost in 2009.

Future conventional campaigns are likely to also hinge on the employment of denial and deception. Information denial has always been a hallmark of successful Western operations, but deception has been neglected due to the brute fact of Western qualitative and material superiority. If one marches with big battalions and has better troops, platforms, and weapons, why do any extra effort to engage in deception? At times, such as during Operation Moshtarak in Afghanistan and Israeli operations in Lebanon and Gaza, operational objectives have been served by telegraphing the attack in advance in order to allow civilians to leave the target zone and intimidate the enemy.

Material superiority, however, will not guarantee victory. As William F. Owen has observed, combined arms capabilities and anti-access weapons have always been available at low cost. Weapons do not make war, but solid tactics, discipline, and excellent fields of fire can devastate armies. The panic over opposing force standoff weapons many militaries are currently experiencing is simply a delayed realization of this fact.[x]

Material superiority will not guarantee victory

The emerging fiscal and military weaknesses of Western nations will necessitate better protection of expensive platforms and well-trained men in military operations. Should expensive surface combatants be sent into harm's way, they will be increasingly protected from acquisition and targeting by technical interference, denial, and decoying. As previously noted, amphibious operations will also likely be protected by technical means and simulation. The WikiLeaks affair and the continuous stream of leaks about counterterrorism and cyber operations will probably result in greater information denial and a greater importance on protecting capabilities and intentions from enemy spies and the domestic media.

Despite its heavily technical dimension, D&D is mostly a psychological activity. Some knowledge of the targets' biases, preconceptions, and decision-making style is necessary to create an accurate lure for them to consume. The psychological element of deception is likely to be bolstered by the growing involvement of national leaders

in operations and expanding amounts of personal information increasingly available online. The increasing involvement of national leaders themselves in military operations also presents enormous risks for deception operations.

Adolf Hitler, in World War II, had a unique understanding of his adversaries' psychology. Up until his miscalculation that Britain and France would not come to Poland's aid in 1939, Hitler adroitly manipulated national leaders and their staffs by preying on their fear of conflict and need for successful resolution. Since World War II, world leaders have become more personally involved in lower levels of warfare. The destructiveness of modern warfare and the need for whole-of-government industrial and political preparation put a premium on powerful civilian leaders, and technology that enabled networking and precision allowed civilian leaders to exert control even over tactical operations.[xi]

American employment of remotely piloted vehicles and special operations capabilities has involved the chief executive in everything from target selection to mission planning. By doing so, it also potentially exposes the political leader and his staff as a direct target for enemy psychological operations and deception, especially in light of the copious amount of public information leaked about the targeting process. Future wars will likely narrow the gap between political leaders, generals and operator-tacticians, putting a premium on psychological manipulation as a means of deception.

Future opponents are also likely to have far greater understanding of American culture than Americans possess of theirs. Poor personal security by soldiers and civilian bureaucrats also allows those adversaries to use social network profiles as a means of constructing target folders. All deception inherently plays up to personal bias and perception; and is there any better means of playing up to a man's ego, apart from exploiting the information contained on his Facebook page? One crucial part of the Normandy deception process was, after all, heavily rooted in Hitler's strong liking for Andrew Thorne, the Grenadier Guards colonel who had been a British military attaché in Berlin from 1932 to 1935.[xii]

D&D and the 'Bodyguard of Lies'

The more important the operation, the greater the necessity for the truth to be protected by a 'bodyguard of lies.' Future wars are likely to contain promiscuous use of denial and deception by both sides. New risks certainly exist along with new opportunities. Any proper study of D&D must incorporate a historical dimension, recognizing that while the technology and organizations in question may be new, the psychological core of D&D rests on human nature. Because human nature is constant, the core psychology utilized in D&D does not vary across the ages.

Deception is sexy and denial is boring. But failures of denial will most certainly lead to failures of deception. Military operations have succeeded in spite of deception failures, but a failure to conduct proper operations security and counterintelligence can lead to potentially serious military consequences.

A FAILURE TO CONDUCT PROPER OPERATIONS SECURITY AND COUNTERINTELLIGENCE CAN LEAD TO POTENTIALLY SERIOUS MILITARY CONSEQUENCES

Finally, while neglect of D&D can be operationally and strategically harmful, even more harmful is a presumption that D&D somehow leads to easy victories. The steep casualty totals of Operation Bagration and the 1973 Yom Kippur War should suggest otherwise. All D&D can do is reduce the toll of war, and amplify, rather than create, the lethal effects of men, weapons, and fighting machines.

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A British Parachuting Capability?

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Parachuting into battle was an enduring yet emotive aspect of 20th century warfare. Developed variously between the Poles, Russians, Germans, British and Americans, parachute insertion primarily came to the fore between 1938 and 1944. The German success of Crete in May 1941 (portrayed as a failure in most western military academies) may well have been at great expense in terms of casualties, but it led directly to an ignominious Allied withdrawal from the island. Few historians would cite the allied airborne insertion into Normandy in June 1944 as a 'failure'. Even Arnhem demonstrated that a British Airborne Corps could be deployed in depth. The intelligence failures of September 1944 can hardly count as an argument that Operation *Market Garden* was flawed as a concept. In similar vein, the crossing of the Rhine in March 1945 (including a substantial airborne element) was a success.

Yet it was the British who were first to 'pull the plug' on the airborne capability, only realising, far too late, of its necessity in November 1956 at Suez. The fact of no subsequent parachute operations involving the UK's conventional military forces — albeit, that there were considerations as an option within recent operations — has led to a general belief that parachute insertions, like the horsed cavalry, have 'had their day'.

IT WAS THE BRITISH WHO WERE FIRST TO 'PULL THE PLUG' ON THE AIRBORNE CAPABILITY

It must also be said that the green-eyed envy of the British Army's infantry has had much to do with a perception that parachute insertion into combat is no longer viable, a view only too often repeated by senior officers of the Royal Air Force, equally determined to marginalise air transport (already near capacity in Afghanistan) in favour of fast jets. With the focus on British land warfare capabilities on 7 June 2012 at the Royal United Services Institute's (RUSI) annual Land Warfare Conference and the announcement of a 20% reduction in the size of the British Army, this debate could not be more topical and apposite.

In this article, I am proposing quite the opposite: that parachute insertion both in counterinsurgency and conventional warfare is as relevant today as it so clearly was in WW2. The Americans, the French (with an airborne capability of 9,000 personnel conducting a minimum of six descents annually) and Russians need no convincing of my argument, so let me focus on the peculiar British aspects of the debate.

PARACHUTE INSERTION BOTH IN COUNTERINSURGENCY AND CONVENTIONAL WARFARE IS AS RELEVANT TODAY AS IT SO CLEARLY WAS IN WW2

First and foremost, a parachute capability is (compared, for example, to the cost of an equivalent armoured capability) relatively inexpensive. A tactical air transport fleet is regarded as an essential requirement regardless of any parachute capability. Nearly all military transport aircraft are, as a matter of routine, fitted for a parachute role. A heavy drop capability, likewise, involves but a few steel platforms. Nor is there a major cost involved in the training of both paratroopers and jump instructors. From time to time the Air

Transport fleet might well be over-taxed (as in Afghanistan currently) and yes, those in training might well face delays in completing their 'jumps', but that does not equate to a claim that the parachute insertion capability is thus economically beyond our means. The Territorial Army also has its part to play in providing 'fill in' reserves at minimal cost.

It is next alleged that the ground-air threat makes any such operation fraught, with the possible loss of life if even a single C-130 was to be shot down. There was much said in support of this point of view when it was considered that the United Kingdom Joint Air Task Force (UKJATFOR) of the 1970s might be required to reinforce NATO on the Central Front during the Cold War in the face of massive Soviet ground-air capabilities. This, though, is no longer the case, as witnessed by complete air domination over Afghanistan, Libya and Syria, to name but a few most recent and continuing conflicts. Certainly, complete neutralisation of the ground-air threat requires substantial resources, but by working with allies this can be achieved, as in Iraq in 2003.

IT IS THEN WRONGLY PRESUMED THAT HELICOPTERS MIGHT ACHIEVE GREATER PRECISION.

It is then wrongly presumed that helicopters might achieve greater precision. But support helicopters (SH) are painfully slow in terms of tactical, let alone operational, reach and are therefore easy targets in themselves. SH also require large amounts of fuel and nowhere near replicate the capability of relatively fast tactical insertion of a massed combined arms combat force by fixed wing. And as was also seen in Vietnam, helicopters are hugely vulnerable to ground–air fire.

As just one illustration of the capability gap, during my time as commanding officer of a parachute battalion, a company group was despatched from RAF Lyneham directly into Egypt by parachute insertion, refuelled over the Mediterranean Sea. A helicopter equivalent would have taken days to achieve the same mission.

It is then suggested that weather conditions or the terrain might cause problems. This is, of course, true, as exemplified in the planning for Jebel Akhdar in 1959 or the Kiel Canal disaster of 1974. But one has only to look at any detailed map of third world countries to immediately note that the climate is usually benign, and that vast areas of countryside are devoted to agriculture, allowing soft landings all round.

Lack of capability is another shibboleth. It is agreed that in the past, nearly all 'heavy' equipment such as artillery, engineers, armoured reconnaissance etc, required heavy lift – and hence were typically

delivered by glider (incidentally, this begs the question: why have gliders become extinct?). But today's anti-armour capability, in the form of JAVELIN, can be brought to the battle under the parachute of its operator, and there is no reason why air re-supply onto the gun or mortar line cannot be exact. From my cottage in Wiltshire I watch every day as RAF C-130 crews practise such pinpoint delivery on to the Everleigh Drop Zone on Salisbury Plain.

In all this the most compelling argument is one of politics. Indeed the most concise criticism against a modern British parachute capability was outlined by the Secretary of State for Defence on 7 June 2012 at RUSI. After the searing experiences of Iraq from 2003 to 2009 and Afghanistan from 2006 to 2014 (we hope), how very much more convenient if British forces were incapable of rapid insertion into 'troubled waters' on grounds of unaffordability? On this basis, a collective wringing of hands within Government, the Armed Forces and media at the most recent atrocity requiring a British response would satisfy everyone. Inaction in the face of adversity would then be justified. Yet we know from 20th century political and military history where that has led.

In conclusion, the logic of a rapid, airborne means of delivery of combat capability in the age, according to General Sir Rupert Smith, of 'wars among the people' (ie intra-state conflict) is somewhat staggeringly obvious. The requirement for Very High Readiness contingency expeditionary forces able to react with speed, reach and agility to as-yet unknown threats to British interests seems all to obvious.

THE CAPACITY TO DROP A COMBINED ARMS SUB-UNIT OF, SAY, 330 MEN, A BATTLE GROUP OF AROUND 900 OR A BRIGADE OF CIRCA 4,000 CAN ONLY BE A 'PLUS' IN THE NATIONAL ARMOURY

This is not to say that delivery by parachute is the only, or most efficient, means available. However, in the context of a non-existent airhead, the capacity to drop a combined arms sub-unit of, say, 330 men, a battle group of around 900 or a brigade of circa 4,000 can only be a 'plus' in the national armoury, not the 'minus' as currently portrayed by those who seem determined to decide otherwise when it comes to investment in Defence. And let us not forget the huge resources available from the USA, our closest ally. I watched as my battalion, the UK's Lead Parachute Battle Group of 1996 ,was simply swallowed into the US C-130 fleet; to be flown, with allies, to target.

This, after all, was the British experience of World War 2. So why not today as well?

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