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NEITHER PIGS NOR PARROTS: A MILITARY CULTURE THAT CAN WIN THE PEACE

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As ongoing operations in Iraq illustrate, the nature of warfare is changing: peacekeeping and warfighting are converging as the space between military and humanitarian activity erodes. Because of the vastly different challenges of fighting wars and handling post-conflict challenges, militaries traditionally train soldiers to be either warriors or peacekeepers. This new type of conflict, however, requires soldiers who are both of these simultaneously. Unfortunately, current organizational culture – focused almost entirely on combat – may prevent the ideological shift within the military that is necessary for molding a new soldier identity. This article addresses this challenge and proposes policy measures that would help transform military culture and better match combat prowess with broad intellectual, political, and social vision. To this end, this article considers how the security environment is evolving, examines how such an environment will severely stress the U.S. military, and offers recommendations for cultural change that concern force structure, operational planning, and the selection, training, and promotion of soldiers.

INTRODUCTION

The United States military needs a new organizational culture. Though appropriate for winning the nation's wars, the current culture is much less capable of securing the other objective so important in modern conflict:

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winning the peace. Despite battlefield success in the conventional phase of its invasion of Iraq, the U.S. is now barely keeping the lid on an ethnic civil war that threatens to boil over. The heart of the problem is that this struggle defies any purely military solution. Instead, Operation Iraqi Freedom necessitates simultaneous proficiency in the most challenging tasks of both warfighting and peacekeeping: defeating a dangerous enemy while concurrently responding to the human dramas inherent in governing a nation, winning hearts and minds, and protecting a society. This war may be a harbinger of changes to come in the global security environment – an environment where combat and peace support operations are virtually indistinguishable.

History and current events, however, suggest that warriors are not good at peacekeeping and peacekeepers are not good at war.¹ A clash of warfighting imperatives and post-conflict norms creates cultural confusion within militaries – a problem that often forces these militaries to focus on either combat or peacekeeping, but not both (Franke 1999). This confusion emerges, most obviously, because these two broad types of missions represent diametrically opposed challenges: in simplest terms, one requires soldiers to instinctively shoot, and the other to avoid shooting. Charles Dobbie, who guided British peacekeeping (as opposed to warfighting or “peace enforcement”) doctrine in the 1990s, explained the problem as such:

The comparison of peacekeeper to peace-enforcer is not tomcat to tiger – no feline family relationship links the two. Pig to parrot is nearer the mark. It is true that a pig and a parrot are both warm-blooded, oxygen-breathing animals – just as the peacekeeper and peace-enforcer may both be soldiers. But, like pigs and parrots, the differences between peacekeepers and peace-enforcers outweigh their similarities. Peacekeepers and peace-enforcers operate in different environments, in different ways, and are guided by different attitudes, motivations and intentions (Dobbie 1994, 141).

If Iraq is any indication of future military operations, however, emerging security challenges require soldiers who can transcend this division. The language of warrior *or* peacekeeper must give way to warrior *and* peacekeeper. In order to help resolve this identity crisis, the U.S. military needs to shift its organizational culture to better recognize the growing overlap of combat and peace operations and to reward those individuals who can thrive in ambiguous settings. Towards understanding this crucial cultural shift, this essay considers (i) the extra-military challenges of winning in Iraq (as well as potential future conflict scenarios), and why these

challenges necessitate change; (ii) how the need for change will create cultural tension within a U.S. military that places so much emphasis on a warrior identity; and (iii) what some measures to alleviate this tension may look like.

CHALLENGES BEYOND COMBAT

Prior to the invasion of Iraq, a Strategic Studies Institute study grappled with the likely post-conflict responsibilities that the U.S. military would have to assume once Baghdad fell. The report presciently concluded that:

To be successful, an occupation such as that contemplated after any hostilities in Iraq requires much detailed interagency planning, many forces, multi-year military commitment, and a national commitment to nation building.

Recent American experiences with post-conflict operations have generally featured poor planning, problems with relevant military force structure, and difficulties with a handover from military to civilian responsibility.

To conduct their share of the essential tasks that must be accomplished to reconstruct an Iraqi state, military forces will be severely taxed in military police, civil affairs, engineer, and transportation units, in addition to possible severe security difficulties.

The administration of an Iraqi occupation will be complicated by deep religious, ethnic, and tribal differences which dominate Iraqi society.

U.S. forces may have to manage and adjudicate conflicts among Iraqis that they can barely comprehend.

An exit strategy will require the establishment of political stability, which will be difficult to achieve given Iraq's fragmented population, weak political institutions, and propensity for rule by violence (Crane and Terrill 2003, 1).

To preempt many of the anticipated post-conflict challenges, the study outlined 135 tasks covering a wide range of topics (including security, public works, legal institutions, education, cultural sites, and civic information) that the military, or some other agency, would have to accomplish to ease

Iraq's transition to peace. Many of the military's tasks went well beyond traditional combat responsibilities, though a large number of governing tasks ideally would become the responsibility of other U.S. agencies and Iraqis themselves. The report did not delineate rigid timelines, but did envision four phases that the transition from occupation force to self-sustaining government would pass through.

The actual course of events warranted the report's most disturbing warnings. As the military discovered, and the International Crisis Group reported in the starkest terms, Baghdad was "a city in distress, chaos and ferment" (International Crisis Group 2003). If anything, reality telescoped the relatively tidy phases of the study into one continuous and frenetic period in which it was crucial that the military complete a vast number of combat and post-conflict tasks simultaneously. Moreover, the nature of the tasks that the military undertook expanded incessantly in the weeks during and immediately after the invasion simply because events on the ground proceeded so rapidly that no other agencies were around to carry the burden. Individual soldiers found themselves undertaking jobs they never anticipated or prepared for: artillerymen and engineers patrolled as infantrymen, and infantrymen built sewer systems or ran town councils (Baum 2005, 44). Officers served as *de facto* players in the Iraqi social system, acting in some instances as town *sheiks* (McFate 2005, 25).

Even after major combat operations have come to a close in Iraq, American soldiers now find themselves, in the words of one observer, "engaged in a mix of lower-combat, lower-risk peacekeeping and higher-combat, higher-risk peace enforcement" (Burgess 2003). The convergence of firefights and nation-building leads to what the UN describes as a growing "erosion of the separation between humanitarian and military spaces" (United Nations Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General 2004). Even if warfighting and peace operations do not occur on the same day, the transition from one to the other may occur so quickly that drawing lines between types of mission is purely artificial. Deciding when and where the combat ends and the rebuilding begins is often impossible. As retired officer and military analyst David Cavaleri writes, Operation Iraqi Freedom is "replete with examples of units conducting combat operations and stability operations sequentially, simultaneously, and more often than not, in a repeatedly iterative manner, all in the same battle space. A deliberate phasing transition model does not adequately address the realities of the contemporary operating environment" (Cavaleri 2005, vi).

Two labels identify this phenomenon wherein the distinction between humanitarian and military space dissolves. "Operations on the cusp"

refers to situations in which reconstruction and humanitarian efforts are on the verge of escalating into high intensity combat. A recent military conference determined that “[t]he cusp’ describes the points of transition between crisis and major combat operations, and between major combat operations and the various categories of post-combat security, transition and reconstruction operations” (Joyce 2005). Similarly, “three-block war” has entered into military argot as a result of Charles Krulak, former commandant of the United States Marine Corps. He was referring to a situation in which soldiers would deliver humanitarian aid on one block of an embattled city, conduct stabilization operations on the next block, and fight an armed enemy on the third block. Iraq, in other words, is a three-block war on a grand scale, where the dividing lines between combat and peace blur, change, disappear, and reappear in quick succession (Marcus 2003).

This is a conceptual shift from previous evaluations of both war and peacekeeping. In the last half-century, the range of missions that militaries worldwide have undertaken has expanded well beyond the traditional concept of warfare. The plethora of post-Cold War peacekeeping missions, especially, fell under a number of different labels that included military operations other than war, stability and support operations, peace support operations, or simply peace operations. “Peacekeeping” often found itself behind an array of adjectives: muscular, wider, strategic, coercive, robust, and complex. Regardless of the name, however, military thinkers responded to these growing responsibilities by formulating a clear distinction between warfighting (the purest recent example of which, perhaps, is Operation Desert Storm in 1991) and all of the other missions (exemplified quite vividly by the numerous peacekeeping and nation-building operations in the Balkans over the last served years.).

Unfortunately, this distinction often does not reflect reality: Operation Just Cause in Panama (1989) transitioned from an airborne invasion to stability operations in less than a week; humanitarian actions in Somalia (1993) erupted into intense urban warfare almost overnight; the multi-national force that landed in Haiti (1994) as part of Operation Uphold Democracy was prepared to invade against violent opposition but immediately ended up in the middle of a serious civil-administration breakdown. Clearly though, Operation Iraqi Freedom is the most dramatic demonstration that any conceptual distinction between warfighting and peacekeeping missions is becoming less relevant.

The convergence of combat and peace operations – the three-block war – is likely to characterize conflict in the near future, and consequently, any

failure to adapt to challenges in Iraq is likely to prove a handicap during military operations yet to come. The nexus of war and peacekeeping/nation-building will likely occur in settings (similar to Iraq) that witness the rise of sub-state and trans-state actors, ethnic strife, small arms proliferation, economic dislocation, and especially government failure. As opponents recognize American advantages in conventional power, they will attempt to leverage their own national or social strengths to mount asymmetric attacks. Political messages and ideas will take on more importance than firepower or air support. Pure security issues will become firmly embedded in political, social, economic, and cultural contexts. Societies will need rehabilitation; governments will need institutional rebuilding. Without a clear political victor – one who captures the hearts and minds of a devastated population – the struggle will continue, even if American troops win every firefight.

As the military sociologist Fabrizio Battistelli and others illustrate, the “simplicity of the dichotomy peace/war is replaced by the complexity of a variable mix of the two elements...in which the relative clarity of the tactical situation of combat/truce gives way to the nebulousness of the situation of neither combat nor truce” (Battistelli, Ammendola, and Galantino 2000, 138-9). Addressing such complexity will require unity of effort on the part of a multidimensional, multilateral, and multi-organizational response. Militaries must switch from a singular security paradigm to a political-economic-psychological-security paradigm, and be ready to work alongside non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, local political actors, private security forces, and foreign militaries. Black-and-white situations of friend/foe will be less likely than “fuzzy” environments where friend/neutral/foe is the norm, or even something more complicated: reliable-friend/likely-friend/neutral/difficult-to-distinguish/reluctant-to-cooperate/tacitly-hostile/actively-hostile, so on and so forth.

If this trend towards more complexity continues, the implications for the military are significant. Soldiers will need to transition seamlessly between the three-blocks of Krulak’s trope, and it will be difficult to task-organize units for different kinds of missions. This stands in contrast to any scheme whereby the military establishes separate forces and headquarters for warfighting and peacekeeping (Congressional Budget Office 1999; Miles 2002; Lovejoy 2003). If there is a clear division between combat and reconstruction phases of a campaign, it may be possible to rotate units as appropriate in order to dedicate certain troops to warfighting and others to stability operations. Such clear responsibilities, though, are not possible

when missions start to blend together; the proper moment to rotate troops may be difficult to discern or simply nonexistent. Furthermore, the critical nature of the early weeks of a crisis situation demands comprehensive action as early as possible. Stability operations may not be able to wait until security is in place, and soldiers in every mission may have to switch repeatedly between combat and reconstruction.

WARRIOR CULTURE UNDER PRESSURE

Traditionally, the U.S. military has focused almost solely on combat. It can shift attention to peacekeeping, certainly, but it does so reluctantly and only by completely setting aside many of the trappings of warfighting. A cultural re-alignment that brings the two together will pose a serious challenge but is nevertheless crucial: just as soldiers need the right weapon for a given mission, they also need the right attitude and the right mindset. Indeed, all innovation is cultural in its essence, and only once the need for change is recognized, can the process of transformation begin (Snider, Nagl, and Pfaff 1999, 17, 22). This is why amidst technological, structural, and doctrinal changes, cultural evolution deserves close scrutiny.

The influential Geert Hofstede, professor and social scientist, defined organizational culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one organization from another” (Hofstede 2001, 391). This “collective programming” reflects values and practices (the latter representing symbols, heroes, and rituals). Interpreted another way, a recent study of the U.S. military considers culture to represent “how things are done” within a given group (Dorn and Graves 2000, xviii). Unspoken norms and values influence personal interaction, daily activity, and decision-making, and – in the words of historian Williamson Murray – are “crucial to how forces prepare for combat and innovate” (Murray 1996, 54). Such culture – mental biases, value judgments, and inherited practices – will heavily influence performance and efficiency (Dorn and Graves 2000, 3). Especially in the military where training and shared experience create strong normative group bonds, collective values will have considerable influence on individuals and small groups.

An organizational culture incompatible with environmental demands threatens military performance both in mission selection and in mission execution. Such a mismatch – increasingly evident in Iraq – is readily apparent in the problems that confront militaries as they adjust to peace support operations.² Traditionally, the U.S. military has carefully cultivated a warrior culture. This reflects, in part, the brutal nature of combat – the demands of which infuse militaries worldwide with a certain fighting

ethos. Shared hardship, the prospects of pain and death, the importance of bravery, and the notion of sacrifice combine to form powerful notions of camaraderie and brotherhood centered on a collective identity as warriors. These values are evident in the heroic combat leader – “a perpetuation of the warrior type, the mounted officer who embodies the martial spirit and the theme of personal valor” – that sociologist Morris Janowitz holds up as a model for this type of culture (Janowitz 1961, 21).

Unique institutional histories also play a part in forming organizational identity. As one British officer observes, “[t]here is no doubt that there is a different psychology and professional culture between the U.S. military and those armies with colonial experience and counter-insurgency experience” (Wilkinson 2000, 212). Decades of preparation to survive a global attack from the Soviet Union contributed to a bias within the United States for large-scale, firepower-intensive, high-technology operations. The actual manifestation of these preferences has evolved somewhat as armored divisions and heavy weapons have made more room for smaller and lighter forces, but the fact remains that military culture has remained clearly focused on winning battles. Defeating armed adversaries is the single greatest responsibility of the U.S. military, and it is an incredibly demanding mission. Careful preparation and training for such a task were evident during the major combat operations of the first two months of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The U.S. military proved itself to be a force of warriors without equal, one that former general Wesley Clark contends is “unchallengeable on the field of battle” (Clark 2003).

This warrior culture, however, does not necessarily adapt well to scenarios beyond such a field of battle. Different challenges between the firefight and the relief area require – in the language of organizational culture – different values and practices. For example, British officers have shown an eagerness to take on more responsibilities in Iraq since in their own estimate, they were better at restoring order and winning hearts and minds than were the Americans (Rufford and Almond 2004). The difficulty that the U.S. warrior culture has during peacekeeping stems partly from a pure mismatch between warfighting and peace requirements: the skills, principles, and methods for one do not translate directly to the other (and in many cases may prove fatally counterproductive in the other). It also stems from simple unwillingness on the part of soldiers to take on new missions. A perception exists among some officers that U.S. military organizational culture opposes any change or innovation whatsoever (Mahnken and Fitzsimonds 2004, 68). With regard to peace support missions in particular, many soldiers consider these operations to be an aberration, a diversion from their true

role of winning wars. This reflects a historical trend whereby a certain ethnocentric and almost anti-intellectual bias within the U.S. military has undercut any constituency for peace operations (Hammond 1998, 111). This disregard extends so far that prior to the invasion of Iraq, the U.S. Army War College decided to close its Peacekeeping Institute (Boot 2003, 57).³ All in all, it seems that peacekeeping may not be worthy of the military's attention, or perhaps that it threatens the soldier's identity as a warrior. Such a bias provides poor orientation for those who wish to navigate the terrain features of future conflict. Out of sync with its environment, the current U.S. military culture that creates a clear dichotomy between warfighter and peacekeeper is running up against serious obstacles in Iraq and will do so again in other three-block wars.

MEANS OF ADAPTATION

Adaptation will not be easy. Militaries are generally wary of or resistant to change for a number of reasons: society has entrusted them with a sacred task to defend the nation, a task that cannot afford wayward tinkering; there often exists little opportunity to test new methods in real combat situations; and militaries almost always grow their own leaders from the ground up, making few allowances for the injection of "new blood" at supervisory or policy-direction levels. Nonetheless, change can occur through conscious planning or because of external shocks such as setbacks in war. Ideally, the military will adopt a three-block war culture that overcomes the differences between the identities of warrior and peacekeeper, and promotes an understanding of war as inseparable from larger social and political processes.

Theoretical Waypoints

Before considering some practical policy options that contribute to this end, it may be useful to understand certain theoretical principles that are likely to underpin this cultural evolution regardless of its specific policy form. Three things in particular seem to offer a conceptual handrail as the military prepares to fight the three-block war:

- The military of the future will need to be just as lethal as it is today;
- While excelling at combat, the military will need to ensure that its battlefield actions contribute to larger political goals in tandem with other agencies, government entities, and social institutions;

- Necessary cultural adaptation will rely heavily on leaders, but will also need to address the entire force and include every service member.

The first point recognizes that the warrior ethos must be the foundation for all future operations. Amongst the plethora of tasks the military undertakes, establishing security by being able to defeat all armed threats is the primary mission, and any new culture must not lose sight of this fact. Soldiers fighting the three-block war confront significant danger and must be able to win on the battlefield, defend themselves, and defend the humanitarian mission. Likely adversaries who fail on the battlefield against overwhelming conventional power may adopt asymmetric methods and turn their attacks against humanitarian organizations and the “softer” elements of modern armies such as civil affairs projects and support troops. Warfare in the future is likely to resemble the current reality in Iraq: firefights or ambushes at close quarters (especially in built-up areas), the blurring of combatant and noncombatant, and the irrelevant distinction between frontlines and safe areas. This is an environment that requires lethal proficiency, split-second decision-making, and uncompromising focus. Personal risk means that there is still a place for notions of sacrifice, grit, camaraderie, and heroic leadership. These are aspects of military life that the traditional warrior culture is comfortable with, especially in the combat branches, and they are still necessary in the three-block war. Indeed, the prospect of combat throughout an entire area of operations means that all soldiers must be proficient fighters, not just those who fill the traditional warrior roles (such as infantry and armor soldiers). In other words, the U.S. military needs more of a warrior culture, one that pervades the entire force.

A warrior ethos, however, is purely the means to an end, and a starting point at that. The military, even while it is winning the firefight, is working not towards military victory for its own sake, but for conflict settlement. A stable peace requires social and economic well-being, justice and reconciliation, and governance and participation. While fostering a warfighting ethos, successful three-block war cultures must be careful to avoid glorifying warrior prowess at the expense of other expertise that is crucial to these larger goals. Soldiers must move beyond the understanding that managing violence is their sole role. As difficult as it is to triumph in combat, this is no longer sufficient. Soldiers must be able to conceptualize their role in larger strategy and understand the sensitive interplay between military, social, political, and economic factors. All soldiers will have to understand that military objectives are largely indistinguishable from political ones, and vice versa.

This is not to advocate that militaries seek to assume the missions of other actors. Indeed, there are good reasons why militaries should willingly surrender these responsibilities to others, but there very well may be circumstances where only military personnel are able to conduct such tasks. Furthermore, when other actors are around, the military must fully understand its own role in the larger picture so it can contribute appropriately to other objectives. In other words, military personnel must appreciate first what the overall national objectives are, and second that achieving these objectives requires careful balance and coordination between the military and other actors. Soldiers must adopt what former airborne officer and West Point professor Sam Sarkesian, along with others, calls “enlightened advocacy”: a posture “based on horizons and perspectives not bound by military considerations and encompass[ing] the view that political, psychological, social, and economic factors are an integrated part of any conflict” (Sarkesian, Williams, and Bryant 1995, 158). Maintaining a concerted effort amidst complex emergencies may require three-block war soldiers to act with nonmilitary considerations foremost in their minds, and in this way finesse may prove more useful than force.

Finally, the officer corps will certainly play a vital role in adopting a cultural shift, but the ideological change that militaries must undergo in order to win the three-block war must also address the rank and file. The differences in responsibilities between military ranks are likely to diminish during operations on the cusp. Two phenomena contribute to this trend. The first is increasing troop dispersal across the battlefield as a result of increased weapon ranges and improved communications. The second is the increasing overlap of the strategic and tactical levels of military operations. Instant media coverage and trans-global communications mean that a small-scale tactical event, for example, may become a worldwide news story with political ramifications.

The implications of these two trends are apparent in what Krulak and others refer to as the “strategic corporal” (Krulak 1999). A corporal is a junior non-commissioned officer (NCO), but the term can refer to any individual at the tactical level whose actions have ramifications well beyond the battlefield and relief area. In essence, every soldier becomes a strategic decision maker because every action, no matter how small, may have strategic implications. All servicemen and women, regardless of rank, can become the public face of national policy. Because the outcome of operations on the cusp may hinge on decisions at the lowest level of the chain-of-command, it follows that every soldier must have well-developed decision-making ability and broad conceptual vision. Efforts to establish

a useful three-block war culture, therefore, must seek to inculcate the entire force.

Practical Policy Measures for Cultural Change

What all of this means in practical terms is difficult to predict, and implementing these theoretical points will not be easy – but every cultural adaptation will reinforce practical change, and simultaneously, every practical change will reinforce cultural adaptation. The recommendations that follow, therefore, could both reflect and encourage cultural change.

Expand and improve specialized civil affairs-type units and skills throughout the entire force. Currently, civil affairs troops are the experts who bridge the gap between soldiers and civilians in crisis regions. According to the Army, civil affairs units bring together “area and linguistic orientation, cultural awareness, training in military-to-host nation advisory activities, and civilian professional skills that parallel common government functions” (United States Department of the Army 2000, iv). These personnel combine military ability with civilian expertise in a number of different fields including law, economics, engineering, refugee management, agriculture, and public safety (United States Department of the Army 1998, 114). Another relevant pool of experts includes foreign affairs officers. These individuals officially “combine regional expertise, language competency, political-military awareness, and professional military skills” (United States Department of the Army 1998, 262). These officers often serve in overseas embassies and as military staff advisors to foreign armed services, and in many respects act as soldier-statesmen (Sargent 2005). Unfortunately, though, almost all U.S. civil affairs assets are reserve units and currently face over-utilization and exhaustion, while foreign affairs officers are only a small group of officers (Kennedy 2003; Miles 2004; Sargent 2005).

While recent changes include transferring many of these reservists to active duty and streamlining the civil affairs command structure, the military should continue to reinforce these units (Graham 2005). Concurrent with this expansion, other changes might make this career path more attractive to military professionals. Currently, for example, civil affairs is not a basic branch like infantry or artillery that is open to all officers as a life-long career path, but rather a specialized reassignment that becomes available only later in one’s career. Raising this skill-set to the level of a formal branch may attract a greater pool of junior officers as well as civilians who might otherwise not join the military.

In addition to adding more civil affairs units – or in lieu of such an addition – leaders and soldiers in every specialty need a level of civil affairs training. This training, moreover, and the ability to demonstrate proficiency in these civil affairs skills, should become a central component in promotion preference for servicemen and women. Often without access to a specialized unit or even advisors, officers and soldiers in the three-block war should have at least a baseline of civil affairs training. Some abilities and skills that currently exist only on the periphery of military life need to be central aspects of every soldier's identity. This might require more extensive language training for every officer and senior NCO (and language proficiency for promotion beyond certain ranks) (Sappenfield 2005). A special focus of additional training, moreover, will need to emphasize cultural awareness. War and peacekeeping bring together individuals from different nations, ethnicities, creeds, and professions. Establishing necessary cultural acumen – whether between a host nation and the military, or between civilians and soldiers – will rely on skill training and attitude adjustment. Preparation should address both specific cultural challenges of a given mission as well as the more general and intellectual topics of how cultural issues relate to conflict environments. In this final regard, it may be past due to fully integrate anthropological study into military training programs, and to create anthropology departments at the service academies.

Ironically, given how important civil affairs-type soldiers are during operations on the cusp, the type of thorough retraining wherein every soldier acquires these formerly specialized skills could make civil affairs units obsolete. Taken to an extreme, in other words, a truly evolved three-block war force would have no separate civil affairs troops – those skills would be second nature throughout the force.

Implement exchange programs between the military, and government agencies and NGOs.

Modern crises will require holistic responses that include governments, international organizations, NGOs, and foreign militaries. Just as the military has its own culture, so do each of these organizations, each operating within its own sphere of situational awareness, intervention policies, and day-to-day procedures. In the 1980s and 90s the U.S. military responded to closer interaction between the different branches (known as joint operations) with several measures to boost confidence and familiarity between the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines (Graves and Snider 1996). These included cadet exchanges between service academies, joint planning headquarters, and cross-branch

assignments for promotion. The same concepts are viable amongst a host of other actors. Just as joint assignments and exchanges currently exist, an increased emphasis on (and, importantly, a promotion requirement based upon) international and inter-agency exchanges may prove the next step in leader career management. Author Robert Kaplan envisions strong interaction on an institutional level: “the next administration . . . will have to advance the merging of the departments of State and Defense as never before. . . . The two secretaries must work in unison, planting significant numbers of State Department personnel inside the military’s war-fighting commands, and defense personnel inside a modernized Agency for International Development” (Kaplan 2004). Similar interaction may be necessary at the lowest levels of the chain-of-command. Officer assignments may include stints at government agencies, or even international bodies and private organizations. Offering such assignments would not only broaden soldier perspectives and experience, but also establish personal contacts between different organizations.

Tie intellectual, university, and civilian accomplishment to military assignments, rank, and incentives. The challenges of the three-block war will defy purely military solutions. Soldiers will require the intellectual background and flexibility to cope with a range of social, cultural, economic, and political tasks. The military should reward those professionals who bring skills and knowledge to the crisis region that transcend combat ability.

Higher learning deserves a more central place in officer assignment and promotion. For example, whereas the military requires officers to have an undergraduate degree and structures time and resources for additional graduate study for most officers, it may be appropriate to tie promotion and job assignments to the specifics of degree field and performance. Certain intellectual fields may lend themselves more than others to particular military specialties (i.e. a degree in nuclear engineering, in one simple example, may be less useful to an infantry officer than a degree in anthropology, history, or psychology). A similar alternative might require cadets and midshipmen to attend and excel in certain elective college courses in order to be eligible for particular post-graduation job assignments. It might also be appropriate to require officers to have advanced degrees in certain academic subjects in order to reach the highest ranks. Once the military fully recognizes that the problems of the three-block war extend well beyond fighting and into the realms of economics, anthropology, international relations, politics, history, and other fields, it may also rec-

ognize the value of analytical academic preparation.

Beyond pure intellectual foundations, the military will increasingly require skills that are traditionally “civilian.” One advantage of having so many civil affairs troops in the reserves is that these individuals are experts in civilian vocations – law, city management, and engineering, for example. While it will not be possible to release many active duty officers and NCOs for the time necessary to achieve true civilian expertise in non-military skill-sets, the military might make greater use of civilian training programs to give soldiers some basic familiarity with a number of different non-combat fields. Simultaneously, the military should strongly favor (in both initial assignments as well as future promotion) those soldiers and officers who can demonstrate certified expertise in civilian skills even if their primary military specialty does not require those skills. Eventually, this might mean that the military relies less on a system whereby individuals must enter the service at the bottom and can only reach higher positions from there. Instead, the military might make some assignments available for mid-career civilian experts who wish to enter the military with a degree of responsibility higher than entry level (similar to the way that medical doctors and lawyers enter the force above the most junior officer grades). One way of doing this would be to assign these individuals as warrant officers (whose technical expertise and specific skill-set distinguishes them from other soldiers, but who typically do not have the more general leadership responsibilities of commissioned officers). Simultaneously, the number of warrant officer positions within combat units would also increase so that these expert-soldiers would become organic assets within frontline formations.

Incorporate “winning the peace” into all existing military intellectual frameworks: operations orders, Mission Essential Task Lists, principles of war, etc. With the right people in place, the most important aspect of developing a three-block culture may rest on properly conceptualizing operations on the cusp as a function of warfighting and peacekeeping combined. This will inform the selection of objectives, success metrics, and training standards. There can be no doctrinal division between peace operations and war (Rigby 2003; Lind et al 1989; Metz and Millen 2005). The distinction between Phase III (combat) and Phase IV (stability) that existed in the plans for the Iraq invasion was an unfortunate conceptual and practical arrangement, and one that may prove utterly meaningless in the future. Military planners must keep the connection between fighting and peace settlement foremost in their preparations for every operation

(Cordesman 2004, v). Lieutenant Colonel Steven Peterson, recalling his experience on the Coalition Forces Land Component Command planning staff prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom, noticed that:

[n]o officer in the headquarters was prepared to argue for actions that would siphon resources from the war fighting effort, when the fighting had not yet begun. To do so would have been contrary to a career of schooling that makes fighting the defining activity of war. No matter how often post-war issues were raised, they never took on an equivalent importance to war fighting considerations in the eyes of the planners or commanders (Peterson 2004, 11).

As security analyst Anthony Cordesman writes, however: “[t]he time – if it ever existed – in which military planners could only plan for war is long over. In fact, it seems fair to say that war plans that do not include peace plans have always been signs of gross military incompetence” (Cordesman 2003, 94).

One way of mitigating any unfortunate divisions would be to reformulate Mission Essential Tasks Lists within the military. Given limited resources and time to train, military units adopt these priority lists to guide their planning. All tasks on this list, in the future, should have doctrinal components that require political, social, and cultural planning. Similarly, in an organization enamored with detailed checklists and training manuals, incorporating thorough and expansive civilian considerations into all operations orders, readiness reports, and planning guidelines would be a simple adjustment. Finally, and more significantly, while staff positions for political and civil affairs currently exist at certain echelons of the military, such staff should become a permanent fixture at every level. Ideally these positions would be eagerly sought-after assignments. To afford this position greater authority and to increase its attractiveness, it might be conceivable to fill this assignment with officers more senior than the operations staff officer (who traditionally is the senior staff officer and third in the chain-of-command behind the commander and the executive officer).

CONCLUSION

The likely increase in disorder and fluidity that will mark the evolution of conflict in the near future has caused the strategist William Lind, along with others, to deride the culture of order that dominates modern militaries (Lind et al 1989). This culture embodies structure and hierarchy, and fights war according to ordered plans. While this is a logical response to linear warfare, it is one that is increasingly at odds with the nature of

modern fighting and emergency situations.

A military that truly internalized all the features examined in this paper would stand as a counterpoise to a culture of order and exhibit flexibility and self-adapting mechanisms. This internalization would likely reflect two broad trends: greater similarity of skills and responsibilities between specialties, and greater similarity of skills and responsibilities between ranks. As soldiers expand their own skill-sets and take on more responsibilities as a necessary response to increasingly complex environments, previous distinctions between combat branches may diminish.

Moreover, this military would conceptualize force in a larger context of social and political processes, and respond to changing crisis area requirements with flexibility and an understanding that the military is only one actor amongst many in the three-block war. This force would fight more effectively on cognitive terrain – the realm of psychological warfare, propaganda, social services, and hearts and minds (Tomes 2004, 27). Such goals will require more training for all soldiers, certainly, and will perforce rely upon a high caliber of recruit (which may require that the government make more attractive career and incentive packages available). This process of change will be expensive, and some may balk at the costs involved. If the alternative is military stalemate and debilitating commitments such as Iraq, however, the total costs of this evolution towards a more comprehensively elite force might be significantly less than the costs of failure.

Prospects for positive change certainly exist. Although struggling in Iraq, today's soldiers are not idle in the face of adversity. Men and women facing daily danger are very resourceful. Additionally, current challenges are shaping and developing a generation of new soldiers. Today's junior leaders who learn to respond to the multifaceted demands of operations on the cusp will conceivably carry these lessons through their careers and up the chain-of-command. Not all of the change is bottom-driven, moreover. There is movement at the highest level of American military planning towards building a more robust nation-building capacity within the armed forces.⁴

Regardless of the specifics of change, what matters most, in the words of one officer, is that “[u]ltimately the Army must ensure its tactics meet [environmental] requirements. It doesn't work the other way around” (Sargent 2005, 14). General Richard Myers, former chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, expresses a similar absolute: “[p]eople must have the mental agility to match their capabilities to new and unprecedented missions and not force the mission to match their capability” (Myers 2003). This is a non-negotiable state of affairs and the military should spend the

necessary time and energy wrestling with what changes are necessary. As unsettling and uncomfortable as the trend is, war is getting more complex as it steadily overflows the boundaries of the traditional battlefield. The soldier of the future must be more accomplished than ever before: combat prowess is only the beginning. Accordingly, the U.S. military needs a culture that properly prepares those remarkable men and women who must – seemingly – do everything.

NOTES

- ¹An analysis of operations in Somalia in the early 1990s concluded that soldiers generally reacted to unfamiliar, ambiguous, and dangerous peacekeeping environments in one of two divergent ways – with either a “warrior strategy” or a “humanitarian strategy” – rather than with the flexibility to alternately adopt both roles (Miller and Moskos 1995, 617-25).
- ²As an example outside of Iraq, a great deal of research has examined how an inappropriate warfighting culture may have been at the heart of the chilling story of the Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia (Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces 1997; Dandeker and Gow 2000, 76, note 23; Klep and Winslow 2000).
- ³A decision since reconsidered.
- ⁴General Peter Schoomaker’s comments that the Army needs “pentathletes” who are adept at a wide range of skills reflects growing realization of the expanding role of soldiers (Donnelly and Walker 2005). The Army’s new counterinsurgency doctrine reflects similar scope of vision beyond purely military ends (United States Department of the Army 2006).

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