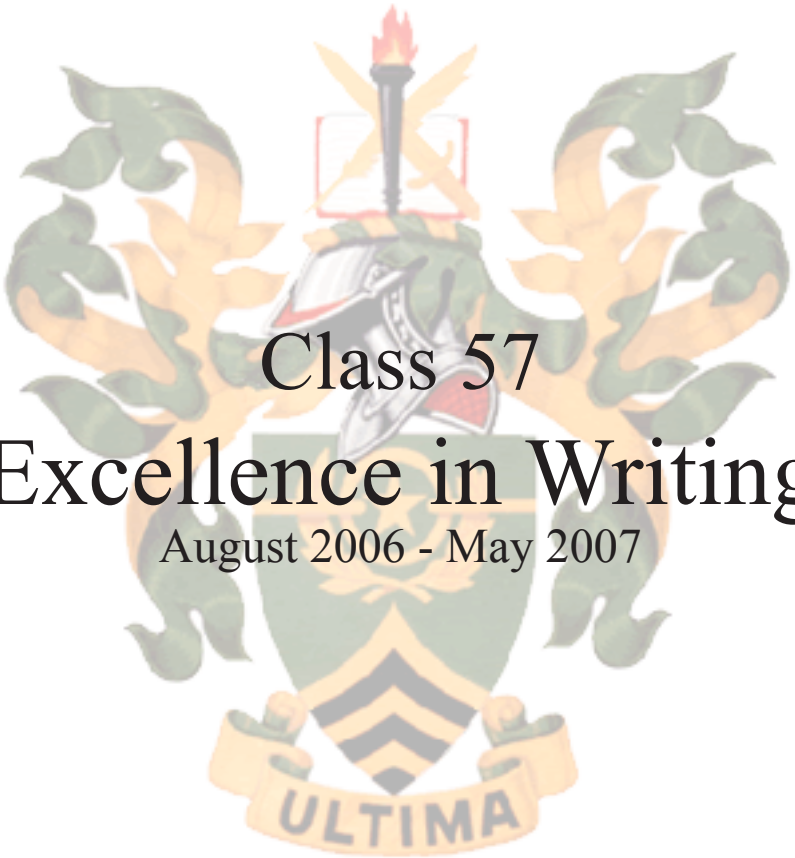
United States Army
Sergeants Major Academy




# Class 57
# Excellence in Writing
August 2006 - May 2007

Gen. (ret) Ralph E. Haines Competition Essays
Military History-Based Argumentative Essays
Ethics Essays

The United States Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) is the Army's executive agent for administering, executing, and overseeing the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES).

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# Foreword

Professional military instruction is crucial in developing effective strategies and executing our sensitive missions in today's Army. It fosters individuality in thought and encourages a wide range of perspectives essential to the continued success of the Army.

This publication represents the most outstanding papers of Class 57 of the Sergeants Major Course. Included are the winners and runners-up for the Haines Research, Military History-Based Argumentative and Ethics essays. These essays are the property of the respective authors and the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

Challenges to the status quo are the bedrock of innovative thinking and transformation. The Sergeants Major Course annual essay competitions do exactly that – provide an opportunity for the students to think "outside the box" and to present individual and unique assessments of ideas that are espoused by others. The vigorous debates which arise from sharing these ideas in a classroom environment lead to the professional development of each and every student involved in the process.

We want to thank the staff and faculty and every member of Class 57 for their overwhelming success attained throughout the academic year. The essays which follow are indicative of the high caliber noncommissioned officers who pass through the halls of our esteemed institute of higher learning, the pinnacle of the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) – the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

"Ultima!"

James E. Dale
Command Sergeant Major

Stanford W. Suits
Commandant

# Introduction

When Gen. Ralph E. Haines established the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy in 1972, he intended it to be the capstone of the Non-commissioned Officer Education System, which had been established a year and a half earlier. The curriculum was lengthy for an Army course – six months. The intent of the course was to provide the education and background necessary for senior NCOs to work effectively on a staff with senior officers. The new sergeant major needed an educational background roughly similar to that provided by the Army War College. Among other subjects, the curriculum provided a background in international affairs, military history, current Army problems, and training in writing. These topics were combined in a lesson commonly called the Haines Award Lesson. Gen. Ralph E. Haines lent his name to the competition that became a part of the lesson. He funded the awards for the winning essays and for many years has visited at the Academy for each competition.

The Haines essays are written by groups of students. They receive or pick their assigned topics near the beginning of the course and finish the essays with a presentation near the end. Each member of the group contributes to a portion of the written essay total presentation. The group essays are evaluated by the faculty advisor (small-group instructor). In committee, the faculty advisors choose the four best essays from each of the three major course divisions (Leadership, Resource Management and Military Operations). The 12 best essays then go forward to be evaluated by a committee made up of the leaders from the three course divisions. They in turn choose the best essay from each division. The group of students who write each of the three essays then prepare and present a multimedia presentation of the essay before the entire class. Each year the commandant, the command sergeant major, the staff and faculty battalion commander, and the Academy historian evaluate both the essays and the presentation to determine the winner of the Haines Award.

The winning team is announced during the class's graduation ball and awarded on graduation day; it is considered a prestigious achievement. Each member receives an engraved plaque and their names are also engraved on a plaque that stays at the Academy. The plaque contains the names of all the Haines Award winners; this year we feature two of those outstanding essays in this work.

# Introduction (Cont.)

The ethics essays and the history-based argumentative essays also emanate from lessons in the Sergeants Major Course.

The Ethics Lesson was introduced into the course in 1994. Each student writes a short essay on some aspect of an ethical issue in the Army. The top three essays are represented here. They were chosen by a series of panels made up of faculty advisors in much the same way the Haines essay finalists are chosen. The winning writers are also recognized at graduation.

The NCO history argumentative essays are the product of a new version of the NCO History Lesson introduced in 2006. Six winners, two from each division, are selected by the Academy historian and printed here. All essays are designed to illustrate some aspect of military history. All the essays are presented in the classroom and expose the students to a rather wide variety of topics. The writers of these six essays are also recognized at graduation.

The essays in this book address widely divergent topics. Some cover current events from an historical perspective; others address issues in international affairs and problems facing the Army today. You are invited to read and enjoy the best Sergeants Major Course Class 57 has to offer in the following pages.

Dr. Robert Bouilly, Ph.d
USASMA Historian

# Haines Competition Essays

The Military and the War on Drugs

Building and Challenges at USAFRICOM

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# The Military and the War on Drugs

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**Abstract**

*The role of the military in the war on drugs has come to the forefront of the American psyche. As a nation at war in the Global War on Terrorism, we must effectively utilize all elements of national power and permit the best trained Armed Forces in the world to augment law enforcement agencies at the highest level. Our nation's leaders must cooperate with the International Community to combat international drug traffickers who operate with an increasingly high level of sophistication. The military could effectively detect and defeat drug traffickers where they lay.*

## The Military and the War on Drugs

Currently, there exists a Joint Service Command comprised of Active and Reserve Component Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Department of Defense civilian employees and contracted support personnel known as Joint Task Force Six, operating under the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM). This Department of Defense organization is tasked to support our nation's federal law enforcement agencies in the interdiction of suspected transnational threats within and along the approaches to the continental United States, including narcotics trafficking. But their role is limited to interdiction, training and surveillance. However, "We expect that the relationship between terrorists and organized criminals will remain primarily a matter of business, i.e. that terrorists will turn to criminals who can provide forged documents, smuggled weapons, or clandestine travel assistance when the terrorists cannot procure these goods and services on their own" (National Intelligence Council, 2004). This makes the "War on Drugs" a campaign in the War on Terror. The United States Military Strategy for the global war on terrorism must include a more vigorous and prevailing role in the war on drugs.

The Department of State has designated the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia—(FARC), the National Liberation Army of Colombia (ELN), and the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, (AUC), as foreign terrorist organizations and has specifically identified the FARC as "the most dangerous international terrorist group based in the Western Hemisphere". On March 18, 2002, Attorney General John Ashcroft announced the indictment of three leaders of FARC for conspiracy to import cocaine into the United States and to manufacture and distribute cocaine in Colombia with the intent of exporting it to

the United States. Transnational terrorism is a threat to freedom throughout the world. Many of these groups have been working together for years to share the lessons of terror and mayhem. They have searched for new sources of income and have become inextricably involved with transnational criminal syndicates who traffic in weapons and drugs and provide resources for extortion and money laundering. Columbia has been fighting this war against terrorism for the past few decades with very limited support. Colombia is one of our closest allies in the region. The FARC-EP is only interested in maintaining and expanding their narcotics funded terrorist activities. It is clear that the government of Colombia has categorically stated that they do not want U.S. troops to come and fight their war for them. They are willing and able to destroy this threat to their country and the world. But we should consider removing the counter-narcotics restrictions on our aid to Colombia so they can decisively eliminate that threat.

We clearly have a possible ‘’narco-terrorist’’ state in the making in Afghanistan, with all the means to threaten our short and long-term strategic and security interests. An estimated 70 percent of the world’s opium production originates in Afghanistan, with an annual production of 3,600 tons. This generates 360 tons of morphine and heroin and vast amounts of illicit monies ripe for the taking by al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and their terrorist allies. When the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, decrees against opium were issued, creating the impression that the Taliban was serious in the war on drugs. However, in fact, the Taliban was merely regulating the drug trade in order to increase their share in its profits. Moreover, al-Qaeda members often provided security for the drug trade. Both then and now, people have found it easy to move between terrorism and drug trafficking. So long as Afghanistan’s narco-warlords are allowed to grow, process, and traffic heroin and opium millions upon millions of dollars will end up flowing into terrorist hands. We may have ended Afghanistan as a training ground for al-Qaeda and other global terrorist groups, but until we go after the drug labs, the open air drug markets, and the traffickers themselves, terrorism will continue to nurture. In January 2004, there was a British raid against a notorious drug lab in northeastern Afghanistan. A fire fight ensued, and a British Soldier radioed for air support. A United States A–10 ground attack aircraft answered the call and bombed the lab. This was a great success, and we could have sent a chilling message to the narcotics lords “your time is up and we are coming for you”. However, actions like this have been limited as we keep trying to separate the drug traffickers from the terrorists (U.S. Congress House, 2004). There are now indications that Bin Laden is attempting to boost his profits through his heroin network. On December 14, 2004 two U.S. Navy vessels led by the USS Port Royal seized three dhows (an Arab lateen-rigged boat usually having a long overhang forward, a high poop, and a low waist) in the Arabian Gulf. These ships carried probable al-Qaeda agents and $10 million worth of methamphetamine, hashish and heroin. If this cargo had made it to Turkey, al-Qaeda would have been able to sell its heroin for five times the price it receives in Pakistan. If the network was able to reach New York, the profit would be multiplied by 40 times. Engaging, disrupting, and destroying drug labs

and traffickers is a crucial part of the War on Terror.

The cooperation between terrorism and organized crime clearly shows the links between threats to national and global security that are widespread, dynamic, and dangerous. This is a "clear and present danger" to our nation security. It is absolutely essential that we engage this threat with all the resources that are available to this great nation. In both cases we have forces on the ground and the capabilities to destroy the base structure of the "narco-terrorist". The United States Military Strategy for the global war on terrorism must include a more vigorous and prevailing role in the war on drugs.

In today's "war on terror", the majority of terrorists receive their finances from illegal drug money. Terrorism is big in our world today, and the threat grows with every new day. Like any bad thing in life, the way to stop something bad is to find the root of the problem. Terrorist organizations operate like any other organization; the only difference is their mission. In order to slow terrorism you must find out what makes them tick, and how their organization functions. No company would be successful if they did not have some form of income, and with terrorism, their organizations do not make a profit from their business. The financing of terrorism has to be a key part of their survival. Illegal drugs in our world are highly sought after and used by all social classes. For a small quantity of drugs, the monetary return is great, and this makes the drug business very appealing for quick and large amounts of money.

Drug money financed terrorist for over 30 years now, and continues as the number one source of income for terrorists today. The whole issue of terrorism is much deeper than most people can imagine. With the technology in our world today moving money and drugs is not a hard task. The illegal drug trade is a global problem that does not just affect the United States, but the entire world in some form. In an internet article Ann Tyson states, "I learned that there are several heroin trafficking organizations operating in Afghanistan". (Tyson 2004)

The [Hizb-i Islami], the Taliban and al-Qaeda finance terror with profits from the sale of heroin," says Rep. Mark Kirk (R) of Illinois. One Afghan drug trafficker reportedly provides lieutenants of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan with 2,000 kilograms of heroin valued at $28 million every eight weeks (Tyson, 2004). Some of these drug networks are very extensive, and the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) chased and collected data for years to try to stop or slow some of the illegal drugs that enter the U.S. every year. With emphasis placed on terrorism, policy makers only see things from the perspective of September 11, 2001. The true picture behind terrorist organizations and their planned attacks on the United States and its allies would really amaze us. Even though we stop drugs from entering the US every year, our country needs to remain vigilant in this fight. The more drugs we stop the better our chances are of crippling most terrorist organizations.

Some Americans could have ultimately contributed to the attack on the twin towers on 11, September 2001. A commercial was run on national television about several people stating I killed someone today. The message behind the commercial was that every time someone purchased some form of illegal drug it

was helping a terrorist. If more people really thought hard about it then maybe it would sway their decision to use drugs. Terrorists love to get our money for their cause, but also destroy Americans through drug addiction. If more Americans took an interest in world affairs instead of being concerned only when crisis hit the home front things just might get better. After 9/11, the American people all rallied behind the flag, put up their yellow ribbons, and thanked every Soldier they saw regardless of their involvement in the Global War on Terrorism. Now it is 2007, almost six years later, and the same Americans are saying "pull our troops out of Iraq".

What the people of the U.S. do not realize is that the illegal drug trade and black market funded the terrorists who destroyed the twin towers by sending them to flight schools, granting them access to intelligence, and many other things. We, as an American society, need to take a strong stand against terrorism. We can achieve this by voicing our opinion to our congressional representatives, and supporting major decisions when it comes to the military involvement in the drug war. The US spends about $37 billion a year fighting illegal drugs, and the war in Iraq and Afghanistan cost taxpayers around $394 billion per year. Some people would say this was too much money to spend. I will ask this question; is it acceptable to lose 2,973 American lives because of terrorist ideology?

The United States Military is involved to some degree in the war against illegal drugs, especially when it comes within our borders, and when aiding terrorists. Neither you nor I will probably ever know the degree of assistance we provide to other countries who are trying to stamp out the spreading of drug trafficking and black market trade. Trying to stop drugs from coming into the United States is like trying to stop water from going through a strainer. What we can hope for in America is to slow down the illegal drugs coming into the United States. Because of the demand for drugs and the monetary value for them, illegal drugs will always be a problem in our world. The war on drugs has been around since President Nixon was in office in the 70's. Nixon first declared the military war on drugs, and every President since has continued to fight this endless war. The one thing that has remained constant is the United States continues to increase funding for the fight against illegal drugs. We have come to realize as a nation that drugs affects our children and society, but it is the number one source for financing terrorism.

Currently in the United States fight in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), we continue to make some progress in Afghanistan and Iraq. People need to understand that this fight against terrorism is a worldwide fight in which all countries should be involved.

> In 2005, over 400 tons of heroin came out of Afghanistan, for an estimated export value of about $2.7 billion. Was any of this money appropriated by terrorists? What we know is that drugs from Afghanistan travel to foreign destinations (mainly Europe and Russia) across regions controlled by scores of warlords with multiple loyalties, insurgents affiliated with the Taliban, al-Qaeda, Hiz-e-Islami, and extremists from Central Asian and Pakistan. These groups impose transit and protection fees on

drug cargos. These same shady players also get cuts from the trafficking of drug precursor chemicals (more than 5 thousand tons) into Afghanistan, and impose transit and protection fees on drug cargos (Costa, 2005).

The future of the United States and the world rely on our military and government to cut the head off this ugly snake called terrorism. Unfortunately, other countries are not involved enough monetarily or militarily. The U.S. has had a lot of support in South America with joint operations against major drug operations. Some effective operations against illegal drugs are ones conducted to destroy laboratories used to process drugs. You could imagine how much money is taken out of play when one drug lab is destroyed. In this business of illegal drugs and terrorism, every dollar taken away from the terrorists leads to saving innocent lives.

Now that we have looked at the main source of financing terrorists, let us look at some possible ways to stop their cash flow. Illegal drug trade in the world nets billions of dollars every year, and the United States spends 40 million annually to fight drugs. The first and probably hardest to do is educating people on where the money goes when they purchase drugs. In addition, we need to teach people on the health problems related to drugs and the possible death that can happen. The first place education should start is in the home, more parents today ignore the things that troubled our society like using drugs. We can even take the education one-step further, and teach it in our schools. In short, we have to attack this problem from every angle possible.

Another way to slow or stop the money flow to terrorists is by establishing a partnership with certain banks, which protect money regardless of where it comes from. Banks in the Cayman Islands are known for money laundering from the illegal drug trade. These banks usually offer no taxation and are hard to track by the United States. These banks offer a low risk for money laundering which aids in the drug trade (Reason, 2001). If there were some way to work with these banks to track large deposits of money, we could probably track more drug trading and ultimately capture more terrorists. Terrorists use many ways to launder their money in effort to aid their cause. Our society probably does not know all the ways that terrorists uses to move their money. If in the fight against terrorism and the drug war, we can limit or stop the flow of money and ultimately win the Global War on Terrorism.

As we move into the future, we must understand that in order to fight terrorism we as well as our allies need to stop illegal drugs from coming into the United States. This fight on terrorism is much bigger than anyone can imagine. I really believe our government does not have a full understanding of the total impact that illegal dugs have in regards to terrorism. Our government and our allies must take a military approach in the war on drugs to cripple the terrorists. The Global war on Terrorism and drugs are seriously linked together, and if you talk, about one you must talk about the other. If we want to win the Global War on Terrorism, we must use the military along with other key agencies to stop the finances from getting to the terrorists. It is a fact that terrorists receive the majority of the finances from illegal drugs (Costa, 2005).

The oath of enlistment that every service member takes states: I do solemnly swear that I will defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestics. Merriam-Webster defines enemy as something that has harmful or destructive effects. Illegal drugs have long been classified as not only harmful, but very destructive. Illegal drugs are an enemy to every citizen in the United States of America. In 2000 it was estimated that 3 million individuals in the United States had serious drug problems. Illegal drug use resulted in approximately 17,000 deaths in the year 2000 compared to the 2,973 Americans killed by terrorist during the World Trade Center attack on September 11, 2001 (Mokdad, Marks, Stroup, and Gerbding, 2004, March 10). Illegal drugs are more of an immediate threat to American citizens than a terrorist attack. Illegal drugs affect Americas of every walk of life, from the poor to the rich, from the city to the country, in the North as well as the South, from the young to the old, and from the famous to the anonymous.

According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse and Alcoholism, Illegal drugs in the United States of America has accounted for an estimated $110 billion loss in expenses and lost revenue. This does not include the 12 billion dollars spent on health care expenses related to drug abuse. These staggering figures added to the physical, mental and emotional toil on our society cannot be dreamed or hoped away. It requires action; action to take back our streets and neighborhoods, action to take back our schools and play grounds, action to protect our children and most of all action to maintain the American way of life. Illegal drugs are a direct threat to the rights set forth by our founding fathers; they threaten our right to life, our right to liberty, and our right to pursue happiness. This is why we need to adopt the famous words of Malcolm X "by any means necessary" in our actions in the battle against illegal drugs. Those that attempt to profit and bring illegal drugs into our country should be considered a serious threat and an enemy to our citizens, and should be dealt with by using whatever force that is deemed necessary to protect the citizens of this great nation. If we continue to turn a blind eye to the effects and cost of illegal drugs, then we put the American way of life in jeopardy, and we provide a catalyst to the eventual downfall of this great nation. Our children and their children will bear the brunt of our tragic mistake.

The United States military is the perfect instrument to fight the war on illegal drugs. The call for the use of the military in the fight against illegal drugs should be directed first at the detection and prevention of the importation of illegal drugs into the United States. Then we should focus on the detection and destruction of drugs produced inside the United States. Finally we should focus on preempted attacks on active drug sources outside of the United States. I will deal mainly with the use of the military in the detection and prevention of the importation of illegal drugs into this country, namely cocaine. Cocaine is the second most used and abused illegal drug in America, and is considered dangerous because it is very addictive (DEA, 2006). Cocaine is not produced in the United States and it is obvious the importation comes from other countries. Most of the cocaine that arrives in the United States is produced in

South America countries and transported through the Mexico-Central America Corridor (DEA, 2006). Our borders should be our initial battle positions in which we wage war on the importation of illegal drugs. This plan will provide other benefits to the security of the United States and its citizens which we will get into detail about later.

Critics of the use of the military on the war on illegal drugs would say the military has been involved in the drug war. Congress directed the Pentagon in 1989 to become the lead federal agency in detecting and monitoring illegal narcotics shipments headed to the United States by air and sea. Since the military has taken on this role it has had what can be considered only limited success. The failures in the past with using the military to help fight the importation of illegal drugs have occurred for the same reason we lost the war in Vietnam: we are trying to fight a limited war by using limited resources. In other words, we are fighting a war with one hand tied behind our back, and we are fighting against an ever evolving enemy who does not play by the rules. In order to win the war against illegal drugs we must rewrite or omit the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, which prohibits the use of military personnel to enforce civilian laws. The justification for rewriting the Posse Comitatus Act is the same justification used in the passage of the Patriot Act. We are a nation at war fighting against an enemy that continues to kill and wound over 20,000 American citizens each year. This enemy will not play by anybody's rule; this enemy does not care about law abiding citizen's civil liberties or rights. In order to defeat this enemy the military needs the ability to take off its gloves and take the fight to the enemy.

The United States military must have the authority to identify a threat and use the amount of force needed to disable or render that threat harmless, and yes sometimes the bad guys will die. We need to send a message to the drug smugglers that we are no longer playing patty cake with them; we will come at them with enough force to either stop them or blow them out of the water or the air. These smugglers will think twice before attempting to enter in to the United States. Critics will say that by doing this we will violate drug smugglers civil rights or their due process of the law if we kill them. The fact of the matter is that once they have decided to enter into our country's territory illegally with these drugs. Once they refused to obey our laws and law enforcement authorities, then they have forfeited those rights and should be viewed strictly as a threat and an enemy. We are losing too many of our sons and daughters, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers to sit back and expect these peddlers of death to do the right and moral thing, we must take action to save our future.

The United States Coast Guard has performed admirably in the defense of our borders but they too are stretched thin. In a budget report to Congress, the Pentagon estimated that it detected only 22% of the "actionable maritime events" in fiscal 2006 because it did not have enough assets to do more. One out of five suspected drug smuggling vessels detected was left alone because of the lack of resources to pursue them. The employment of United States Navy manpower and equipment would greatly enhance the detection of drug

smuggling boats and planes in and over our nation's waters. The Navy's E-2C Hawkeye is an all-weather, carrier-based, tactical airborne warning and control system platform that provides all-weather airborne early warning and command and control functions for a carrier battle group. The E-2C Hawkeye could be used in the drug interdiction role by providing surface surveillance coordination, interceptor control, search guidance and communications relay. A dedicated number of these aircraft could provide continuous, overlapping detection coverage.

The Navy's special warfare Special Boat Teams (SBT) with their MK V Special Operations Crafts could be used to interdict fast boats used to smuggle drugs into this country. These boats, operated by the SBT used in conjunction with the United States Coast Guards rigid-hulled inflatable boats and surveillance helicopters, would enhance the ability to detect, track and apprehend drug snuggling boats. These boats equipped with the necessary firepower to destroy drug smuggling boats. The United States Army and Air Force are clearly a force multiplier to the customs and border patrol agencies in their fight against illegal drug smugglers. The United States Air Force's E-3 Sentry airborne warning and control system can provide detection of drug smuggling aircraft flying under the view of conventional radar. The E-3 can also vector military helicopters and planes in the pursuit of the smuggler aircraft. The United States Army has the capabilities to own the night and use this advantage to disrupt the flow of illegal drugs into our country. One division of Soldiers and equipment used in the interdiction of drugs entering the United States by land would provide a force multiplier for the over-stretched United States Border Patrol. The increase of manpower, night vision devices, ground surveillance radars and firepower will enhance the security of our borders. This mission would also provide training opportunities to sharpen the army's skill as we continue to wage the war against terrorism.

The United States military has the ability to wage a very successful war against the importation of illegal drugs. However, this could only work when we allow the military to do what it does best; that is close with and destroy the enemy. I would rather bury one hundred drug smugglers than bury one innocent child killed by a drug addict or a dealer. The use of the military in the interdiction of illegal drugs entering this country would free up much of the domestic police force. This would enable them to direct more assets and time at battling the illegal drugs that are produced inside this country along with other domestic issues.

The use of the military in the war on drugs will benefit the war on terrorism. The methods and routes that drug runners use to smuggle illegal drugs into America are the same methods and routes that terrorist can use to smuggle weapons and personnel into America use in a terrorist attack. The U.S. military possess the proper equipment and skilled personnel to execute a successful defensive and offensive operation. These operations would greatly decrease the influx of not only illegal drugs but also the ability for potential terrorists that might attempt to enter into U.S. borders. Terrorists do not possess the ability

to carry out a long range terrorist attack on America soil. These terrorist must either acquire the tools of their trade from inside our borders or smuggle them in across our borders. The United States military, while fighting the war on illegal drugs, can detect and stop these terrorist weapons or personnel illegally trying to enter across our borders. The fine men and women who are carrying the brunt of the burden of the war on terror would perform superbly on and inside the borders of the United States. Once again, their performance would be directly tied to their rules of engagement. The military must be given the "green-light" to engage and destroy all enemies foreign and domestic. The United States military is the right organization to help us win the war on illegal drugs and terrorism.

Political divisions within the United States Government makes decisions regarding the use of the military in the "war on drugs" difficult to reach. Military leaders plan strategic battle with objectives that are measured as successes or failures. This nation is already losing the drug war measurable by the masses of illegal narcotics smuggled into the country, the number of casual users, and drug abusers. Objectives cannot be agreed upon to measure success or failure until the U.S. Government can agree on how to fight, who to fight, and where to fight the war on drugs. Political conflict such as this will hinder military action in the drug war, making it difficult to plan, finance, and implement in a timely manner.

The approach taken by Washington towards the drug problem in this nation has been centered on eliminating drugs at the foundation of production and improvement of capturing them before they contact American shores. The main targets for these policies have been the South American countries such as Colombia. The plan of action to prohibit the production and distribution of illegal drugs are programs such as crop substitution, eradication, interdiction and better trained law enforcement.

Since the early 1980s, this nation's government has wanted to restrict the supply of drugs at the source. Most of the efforts have been directed towards countries in South America, the source of most cocaine and marijuana received into the United States. By amending the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, which prohibited the use of military in enforcing civilian laws, Congress authorizes the president to utilize the military in the "drug war". When this legislation was passed Congress was concerned primarily. In using troops to strengthen the interdiction endeavor along the length of the coasts and the U.S.-Mexican border. The use of the military in the "drug war" on foreign territory was the ideal means of engagement. The idea does not seem to have impeded production or the exportation of drugs from South America or Afghanistan.

In South America, mainly Colombia, the use of the military has had no significant impact on the production and export of cocaine. In past years, coffee was the number one agricultural commodity in Colombia. The coffee bean's number one position has been replaced by the coca plant. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the (FARC), have become a "Narco-democracy." The FARC presence in Colombia is seen, heard, and felt throughout the country. The U.S. military presence and aide to the Colombian government is often counterbalanced by ever present corruption and bribery of public officials. Along

with interdiction, the Colombian government has chosen fumigation to fight the export of cocaine. This particular tactic against the coca plant has proven to be more harmful against legitimate crops. Unfortunately, fumigation has had little effect on the coca plant, but caused irreparable damage to the banana tree and papaya tree. To the poor farmers of Colombia, the coca plant is not a matter of right or wrong, but a simple matter of survival, food, shelter, and clothing. No viable alternative has been offered to the farmers to sustaining the necessities of life.

The U.S. military presence in Afghanistan has not reduced the production of opium poppy. Statistics show that since 2001 production has increased to the highest amount ever. According to the honorable Karen P. Tandy, administrator, Drug Enforcement Administration, before the Committee on Armed Services U.S. House of Representatives, June 2006, "In the mid-1980s, Afghanistan emerged as a major source of illicit opium in the region and the opium trade became the largest source of income in Afghanistan. Throughout the 1990s, Afghanistan produced increasing quantities of illicit opium, and by 2000 accounted for over 70 percent of the world's supply. By contrast, the Taliban's taxing and controlling poppy cultivation during their rule, culminating in an announced "ban" during 2001. Cultivation and production declined to only 63 metric tons, significantly below what it had been in previous- and, unfortunately, future- years."(DEA 2006)

Taking advantage of the disorganized situation that immediately followed the fall of the Taliban rule and at the onset of the presence of coalition forces in the fall of 2001, Afghan drug traffickers encouraged farmers to restart opium poppy cultivation. Despite a renewal of the poppy ban in January of 2002 and a reasonably successful eradication campaign in April of that year, Afghanistan once again took the lead as the world's chief producer of illegal opium. "U.S. Government reporting indicates that opium production in Afghanistan rose from an estimated 1,278 metric tons of potential oven-dried opium produced in 2002 to 2,865 metric tons in 2003, and to 4,950 metric tons in 2004, the highest amounts of opium production ever recorded in Afghanistan. In 2005, although opium production declined to an estimated 4,475 metric tons, Afghanistan remained the source of approximately 92 percent of the global illicit opium supply." (DEA 2006)

The Afghan society has extensive corruption throughout. Copious reports to the Kabul Country Office are received referencing illegal activity at all levels of government. These reports included civil, legislative, and law enforcement agencies. There were also reports pointing out that officials are in some way involved or are intentionally ignoring the illicit actions of traffickers who maneuver within their zones of responsibility. By empowering corrupt officials, DOD often furthers drug trafficking instead of preventing it. As case in point, during

> "June 2006 the DEA and Afghan Counter narcotics Police raided the offices of the then-governor of Helmand Province, Sher Mohammed Akhundzada. There was found over nine metric tons of opium—the largest since the U.S.

military returned to Afghanistan in 2002." (DEA 2006)

The United States, through its war on drugs, has promoted political insecurity, corrupt officials, and diminished the health and well-being of the environment in targeted areas around the globe. As the U.S. pursues its international "war on drugs" it also unconsciously engage in a war on poor people, most of them crop farmers striving to survive in the middle of a treacherous no-win situation. Unless the U.S. government includes in their war on drugs a plan to replace the drug crop with a viable substitute to boost the economic growth of poor foreign farmers, the war on drugs on foreign soil will have no measurable success.

The American people who use and condone the use of illegal drugs are financing terrorism. It is believed that neither terrorists nor leaders of drug cartels are drug users or abusers. American drug users are oblivious to how they are supporting terrorism by purchasing illicit drugs. Commercials, billboards, and every other significant means of media should graphically demonstrate that buying illegal drugs in not a personal matter but a matter of national security. The money spent for every snort of cocaine, puff of marijuana, or needle full of heroin buys a bullet, a weapon, or some means to kill a member of this nation and allied forces. "Americans spend nearly $65 billion every year on illicit drugs." The Taliban is not building mega mansions or driving the most expensive vehicle with the monies received from drug trafficking. They are buying weapons and creating explosives to kill the defenders of freedom. "In its 2005 World Drug Report, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimated illicit drug revenues generated in the United States, Canada, and Mexico during 2003 at $142 billion." (Office of National Drug Control Policy 2007)

Americans are cautious about engaging the military in the domestic part of the war on drugs. Military forces are trained to seek out and destroy an enemy in wartime as critics continue to identify. Constitutional law and civilian law enforcement contain an abundance of meticulous points which military training does not address. Each member of the military has sworn or affirmed their allegiance to defend the constitution from both foreign and domestic enemies; the enemy is not the average citizen. In order for the production and export of drugs not to be profitable for drug traffickers, the demand for the product must be significantly reduced in this nation. Not many Americans want to consider their closest friend or relative an enemy or threat to the United States. As long as drugs are exchanged for cash, and cash exchanged for weapons and munitions, all illicit drug-using citizens can be categorized as an enemy. The United States justice system provides the drug users with rights that may not be compatible to the rules of engagement (ROE) in war. Current ROE on foreign soil has put many military leaders in ethical dilemmas, which have brought them before the military judicial system. Using the military to engage in the war on drugs on domestic soil would jeopardize the stability and of this nation.

The United States military has taken the war against terror to foreign soil. The DEA and the military must bring the war on drugs to American soil. To be

fully successful in the drug war, the fight would also have to take place on U.S. soil. Many U.S. police departments, such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Detroit have experienced drug scandals. These scandals have identified corruptions which have required those who have sworn to protect and serve to be fired or arrested for some drug-related offense. Can the American public handle seeing the U.S. military take up arms against its local law enforcement officials, for they too will at times be the enemy in the war on drugs?

In closing, the proper function of the military in a democratic republic is to protect the liberty and security of the people from the armed forces of threatening states which is a daunting enough task in a complex and often volatile international environment. Though the United States military is involved to some degree in the war against illegal drugs, it can contribute more by providing logistics, intelligence, and manpower. Existing resources from the DEA and the capabilities of the military on the ground can successfully destroy the base structure of "narco-terrorists." The military is willing and capable of engaging, closing in on, and destroying these "narco-terrorists." Modifying current legal restraints will allow the military the latitude to conduct operations without regard to domestic restrictions similarly to the capacity provided domestic law enforcement under the Patriot Act. However, a society that values individual liberty will likely oppose any effort to expand the military's power beyond its rightful constitutionally established sphere, even if it meant a significant impact against illegal drug production, sales, and use within the United States.

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# Building and Challenges at United States African Command (USAFRICOM)

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**Abstract**

*The United States (U.S.) Department of Defense (DoD) divides operations in Africa between three Combatant Commands: U.S. European Command (EUCOM), U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), and U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM). The division creates inefficiency when dealing with the DoD, government agencies, and African countries. The U.S. will form the United States African Command (USAFRICOM) to narrow the focus of the current commands. The U.S. must speak with one voice in order to work with international partners against the war on terror. USAFRICOM's voice will promote democracy, security, economics, and human rights throughout Africa.*

## Building and Challenges of USAFRICOM

> *Today, I am pleased to announce my decision to create a Department of Defense Unified Combatant Command for Africa. I have directed the Secretary of Defense to stand up U.S. Africa Command by the end of fiscal year 2008. This new command will strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa. Africa Command will enhance our efforts to bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa. We will be consulting with African leaders to seek their thoughts on how Africa Command can respond to security challenges and opportunities in Africa. We will also work closely with our African partners to determine an appropriate location for the new command in Africa.* **-President George W. Bush** (The White House, 2007 February)

The current demands of the war on terror prompted the U.S. to develop an additional combatant command to manage the Africa independently. The U.S. interest in Africa increased immensely since the end of the Cold War along with an increase of terrorist events leading up to and including September 11, 2001. (Houlgate, 2005)

As coalition forces push the al-Qaeda network from their training grounds in Southwest Asia, the terror groups attempt to move into the Saharan Desert,

the Horn of Africa, and other states within Africa. Their actions force the U.S. to draw our counterterrorism elements and global constituents in the protection of these nations and their assets.

Many nations within Africa are chronically unstable and war-torn, making them vulnerable to terrorism. Chad, Sudan, and Somalia are only of few examples of ongoing conflicts in Western Africa. Humanitarian assistance is required throughout almost every nation in Africa due to the high rate of diseases such as HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. Africa contains many of the poorest and least developed countries in the world.

The requirements increase when African economic growth and infrastructure development is considered. As the U.S. National Security Strategy and Strategy for Combating Terrorism enforces globally working with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations (U.N.), the need for an African Combatant Command is self-evident. The ability of one commander to make decisions in the interest of all U.S. forces for the continent of Africa is paramount to the success of our military missions in the region and the protection of both our national interests and those of our African allies.

Whelan et al. (2007), in a recent press conference, concluded the creation of an African Combatant Command will facilitate better coordination between the DoD, other U.S. government agencies, and allies. Bringing together these agencies and nations will create a more effective means of enforcing policies concerning the assistance and commitments to Africa. Current programs, such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act, the Millennium Challenge Account, the Global Peace Operations, and several counterterrorism programs are not coordinated through any one central command.

**National Security Strategy - Africa**

USAFRICOM will enforce the national security strategy and orchestrate all concerned organizations into a central enterprise management base. The U.S. founded and wrote the National Security Strategy on two pillars in March 2006. The first promotes freedom, justice, and human dignity with goals to end tyranny, and extend prosperity through free and fair trade. The second pillar of this strategy is confronting the challenges of our time by leading a growing community of democracies. (The White House, 2006 March)

The problems threatening the foundation of the U.S. African pillars are pandemic disease, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), terrorism, human trafficking, and natural disasters. (Houlgate, 2005) A new totalitarian ideology now threatens a philosophy not in secular thinking but in the perversion of a proud religion. The U.S. must lay the foundation and build the institutions that our country needs to defeat these threats. These preceding words paraphrased from President Bush will guide the Joint Chief of Staff and the USAFRICOM commander in decisions concerning how best to protect our national interests and that of our allies.

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, democracy in Africa has advanced. States such as Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mauritius, Nigeria, and Senegal held

elections with peaceful transfers of power, growth in independent judiciaries, and improved election practices. Many governments are still at fragile stages of political development, while others such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Uganda are regressing to a point of political collapse.

The U.S. uses an array of political and economic tools to end tyranny, such as launching the Global Peace Operations Initiative at the 2004 G8 Summit. The purpose of this initiative is to train peacekeepers for duty in Africa and develop to the North African Initiative's Foundation for the Future. The U.S. also tailors assistance and training of military forces to support civilian control of the military and respect for human rights in democratic societies. Programs such as Pan Sahel provide training and assistance to Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad. The program improves border security and maximizes opportunities to combat terrorism by providing basic police training and equipment. The East African Counterterrorism Program aimed largely at Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Tanzania provides security and border control training and assistance to the eastern region.

The U.S. developed a Fair Trade Agreement (FTA) with Morocco and is attempting to develop FTAs with the countries of the Southern African Customs Union: Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland. Economic freedom is imperative to a free society and individual security. Economic freedom also enforces political freedom, diversifying centers of power and authority that limit the reach of government.

In the fight against HIV, AIDS, and malaria the U.S. will not relent. A cure for these diseases is a way to promote security across the world. President Bush announced (2003) the Emergency Plan for Aids Relief in Africa during his 2003 State of the Union Address. The program covers the period of 2003 to 2008 and will prevent 7 million new infections, provide treatment to 2 million infected individuals, and care for 10 million AIDS orphans and others affected. An additional initiative to fight malaria will reduce the deaths by 50% in 15 countries. (Bush, 2003)

> President Bush made the following statement in his January 2007 state of the union address: "American foreign policy is more than a matter of war and diplomacy. The U.S. mission in the world finds itself based on a timeless truth: To whom much is given, much is required. We hear the call to take on the challenges of hunger and poverty and disease -- and that is precisely what America is doing. We must continue to fight HIV and AIDS, especially on the continent of Africa. Because you funded our Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the number of people receiving life-saving drugs has grown from 50,000 to more than 800,000 in three short years. I ask you to continue funding our efforts to fight HIV/AIDS. I ask you to provide $1.2 billion over five years so we can combat malaria in 15 African countries (Bush, 2007)."

In addition to aiding the afflicted, militant Islamic radicalism is the primary ideological conflict we face with most nations today: its name is terrorism. Terrorism has evolved into a multi-billion dollar practice to further radical

political and social objectives. The U.S. government must reform institutions or create new ones to meet African challenges and make cooperation more permanent, effective, and wide reaching.

**National Strategy for Combating Terrorism**

The 2006 National Security Strategy for Combating Terrorism concerning the continent of Africa states the following:

> *"Africa holds a growing geo-strategic importance and is high priority of the United States. It is a place of promise and opportunity, linked to us by history, culture, commerce, and strategic significance. Our goal is an African Continent that knows liberty, peace, stability, and increasing prosperity. Africa's potential has in the past been held hostage by the bitter legacy of colonial misrule and bad choices by some African leaders. The United States recognizes that our security depends upon partnering with Africans to strengthen fragile and failing states and bring ungoverned areas under the control of effective democracies…"* (The White House, 2006 March).

The 2006 strategy refocused U.S. efforts to an evolving enemy. The war on terrorism employs military power, diplomatic influences, and judicial activities to protect and defend the U.S., disrupt terrorist operations, and deprive terrorists of operational needs. The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism is a two-pronged vision aimed at defeating violent extremism and creating a global environment inhospitable to violent extremists and all who support them. (The White House, 2006 September)

By providing assistance and training to states that lack the necessary capacity to maintain effective control over their borders and vast lands, we will eliminate the havens terrorists use as launching pads for terror. Additionally, USAFRICOM will provide African nations the ability to strengthen their justice systems, local police, border patrol, and other security forces. Terrorists can take advantage of instability to create exploitable conditions. The U.S. will continue to build a foreign policy for peace operations, reconstruction, and stabilization with foreign partners and international organizations to enable countries in transition to reach a sustainable path to peace, democracy, and prosperity.

The U.S. maintains success against al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations through effective partnerships. Continued success depends on the actions of a powerful coalition of nations maintaining a united front against terror. Multilateral groups such as the International Maritime Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization as well as regional organizations including the Organization of American States, NATO, the African Union, and the Association of South East Asia are essential elements to fighting this war on terror. We are building capacities in Africa by training countries in all areas of counterterrorism activities, including strengthening their ability to conduct law enforcement, intelligence, and military counterterrorism operations. The

U.S., coupled with its coalition partners, provide training, equipment, and other assistance across the globe to defeat terrorists and deny them of funds and freedom to move and hide in potential havens and gain WMD.

Reallocation of missions throughout the EUCOM, PACOM and CENTCOM to create USAFRICOM will provide more emphasis in exploiting these potential havens and allow combatant commanders to focus more on their particular Area of Responsibility (AOR). The main goal of USAFRICOM will be to develop a stable environment on the continent to promote civil society and improved quality of life for the African people.

**Strategic Importance of Africa**

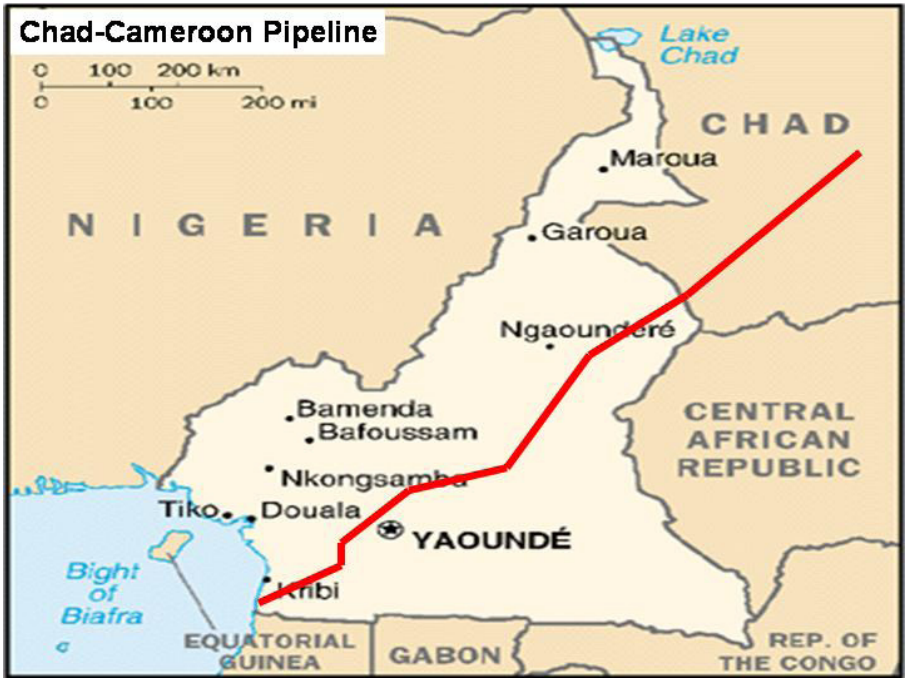
Africa's three main elements enforcing its strategic importance are its significant resources, vulnerabilities to terrorist elements, and forecasted economic problems because of disease proliferation.

USAFRICOM will inherit the 35% of the world's land mass and 25% of the population with the possible exceptions of Egypt and the eastern border islands. (Wood, 2007) Current statistics (Africa, 2007) depict Africa as a country divided into 54 countries with over 900 million people who speak over 1,000 languages. The expected rise in population will reach 1.2 billion by 2020, surpassing the combined populations of Europe and North America. (Aho, 2005) In addition to the population growth of Africa, the U.S. must realize the growth of U.S. national interests in Africa.

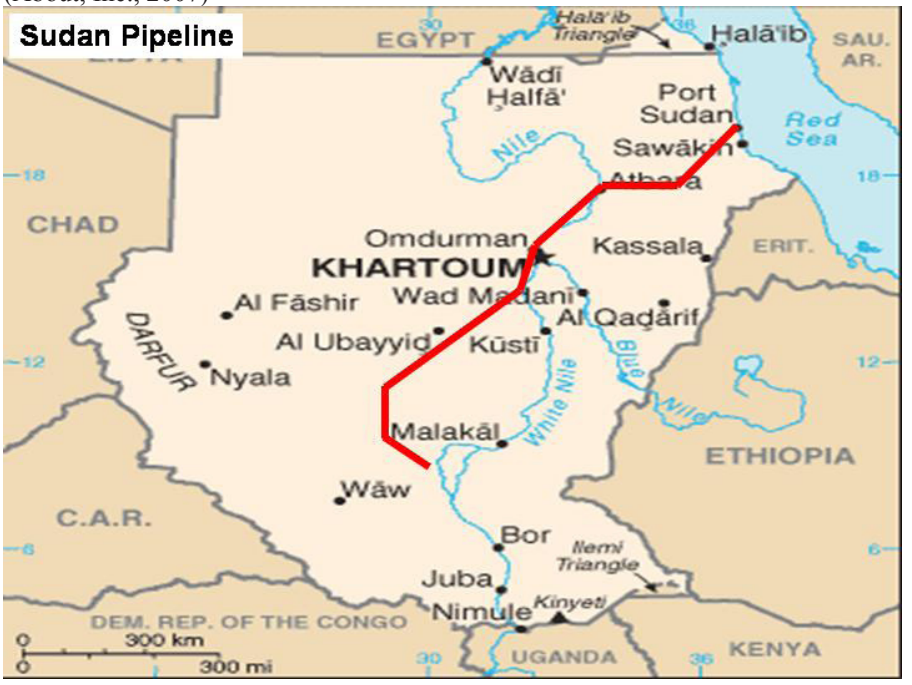
The U.S. realizes it is dependent on raw materials from Africa: manganese (for steel production), cobalt and chrome vital for alloys (particularly in aeronautics), vanadium, gold, antimony, fluorspar and germanium - and for industrial diamonds. Zaire and Zambia possess 50% of world cobalt reserves, and 98% of the world's chrome reserves are in Zimbabwe and South Africa. South Africa also accounts for 90% of reserves of metals in the platinum metal group. (Abramovici, 2004)

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (2007) stated African countries collectively provide 424 thousand barrels of oil annually more than Canada, the largest supplier of oil to the U.S. According to some estimates (Walker &. Hanauer, 1997) Africa will provide up to 25% of the U.S. oil imports by 2015. Former secretary of state for energy, James Schlesinger, at the 15th World Energy Council stated, "What the American people learned from the Gulf War was that it was far easier to kick people in the Middle East into line than to make sacrifices to limit U.S. dependence on oil imports". (Abramovici, 2004)

Two strategic petroleum routes, (next page), lie at the center of U.S. thought: in the west, the Chad-Cameroon pipeline and, in the east, the Higleig-Port Sudan pipeline.




(About, Inc., 2007)




(United States Central Intelligence Agency, 2007)

The 3.7 billion dollar Chad-Cameroon Petroleum Development and Pipeline Project, operated by ExxonMobil, is a 1,070 km pipeline transporting oil from Doba oil fields to facilities on the coast in Cameroon. The 994-mile Higleig-Port Sudan pipeline lies in close proximity to the U.S. military base in Djibouti. The U.S. is considering other areas in Chad and Sudan to further its projects in the region. (Esso, 2007)

**CENTCOM and EUCOM Transfer of Responsibilities to USAFRICOM**

The DoD divides operations in Africa between three Combatant Commands: EUCOM, CENTCOM, and PACOM. CENTCOM's AOR overlooks Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia and Kenya. EUCOM's AOR takes responsibility for the rest of the nations in the African mainland. PACOM's AOR focuses on Madagascar, the Seychelles, and the Indian Ocean area off the African coast.

Missions USAFRICOM will inherit from CENTCOM include humanitarian assistance and non-combatant evacuation operations in Liberia, Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, and Nigeria as well as major counter terror initiatives in west Africa and the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) Area of Interest (AOI). The Horn of Africa has numerous conflicts and ethnic groups that cross borders and therefore affect each country involved in any conflict. (Foster, 2006)

CENTCOM, the geographic region of Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) includes Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Sudan, Yemen, Somalia and the Seychelles. CJTF-HOA conducts operations, training, and humanitarian missions to assist host nations to help themselves in combating terrorism. Kenya is important in this regard, playing a leadership role throughout East Africa. With one of Africa's most professional militaries, Kenya is a critical ally in our mutual fight against terrorism in the region. In September 2005, Kenya hosted regional exercise GOLDEN SPEAR 2005, and in close cooperation with CENTCOM established the Disaster Management Center of Excellence in Nairobi. The primary focus of this Center of Excellence and the GOLDEN SPEAR exercise is to build regional disaster management capacity and cooperation. These missions will fall into the USAFRICOM area of responsibility, allowing CENTCOM to focus more on Iraq and Afghanistan. (Foster, 2006)

The Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI), completed in early 2004, lies in EUCOM's AOR. According to EUCOM's Operations and Initiatives (United States European Command, 2006) the TSCTI is designed to help develop the internal security forces necessary to control borders, combat terrorism, and other illegal activity. The program builds on the successful Pan Sahel Initiative, which focused on Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Chad. TSCTI expands the focus to include Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria and increases assistance with detection and response to the migration of asymmetric threats throughout the region. The initiative will also help these nations maintain security by building the capacity to prevent conflict at its

inception.

EUCOM's Operations and Initiatives document further states (United States European Command, 2006) TSCTI serves as a program to maximize the return on investments by implementing reforms to help nations become more self-reliant. Operation Enduring Freedom – Trans Sahara (OEF-TS) is the U.S. military component of TSCTI. EUCOM executes OEF-TS through a series of military-to-military engagements and exercises designed to strengthen the ability of regional governments to police the large expanses of remote terrain in the trans-Sahara. These missions will fall into the USAFRICOM area of responsibility and enable EUCOM to concentrate on efforts to- support NATO, Kosovo Force (KFOR): Operation Joint Guardian / Task Force Falcon, Georgia Security and Stability Operations (Georgia SSOP), Center of Excellence-Defense Against Terrorism (CoE-DaT), Caspian Guard, and DoD Rewards Program in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

NATO is an alliance of 26 countries from North America and Europe committed to fulfilling the goals of the North Atlantic Treaty signed on 4 April 1949. The fundamental role of NATO is to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means. The EUCOM's primary mission in support of NATO is to provide combat-ready forces to support U.S. commitments to the NATO alliance. The Kosovo Force (KFOR) is a NATO-led international force, whose objective is to establish and maintain a secure environment in Kosovo. The objective includes tasks providing public safety, monitor, verifying and enforcing compliance with the agreements that ended the conflict, and assisting the U.N. Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) (United States European Command, 2007).

The Georgia SSOP is a program to train and equip Georgian forces and command staff for peace support operations in Iraq. The CoE-DaT, located in Turkey, is a world-class center created by EUCOM to fight the war on terrorism. Caspian Guard is a EUCOM initiative, which established an integrated airspace, maritime and border control regime for the nations of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. (United States European Command, 2007)

The DoD Rewards Program in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a EUCOM program to encourage citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina to provide information on terrorist activities and weapons. The program guarantees anonymity for persons who provide information about terrorist weapons, individuals, and organizations (United States European Command, 2007).

**Terrorist Vulnerabilities**

Africa is a breeding ground for terrorism and an important staging area, training center, and favored place to target U.S. interests. USAFRICOM will efficiently protect the increasing U.S. interests by seeking out terrorist organizations known to inhabit areas of the continent and strengthen relationships with foreign countries exercising commitments in Africa. African leaders acknowledge their national problems and look to the U.S. for solutions. In return, they contribute to the war on terror with intelligence, police, and

military cooperation, and the sharing of air and maritime facilities.

Many conditions in Africa pose easy targets for terrorist attacks. Anarchic rule by corrupt local law enforcement coupled with local terrorist organizations other than al-Qaeda, leads to the political violence endemic to the region. Porous borders with lax security allow the unregulated movement of people and supplies. A large contingent of Americans in embassies and the destabilizing influence of neighboring countries embroiled in wars and conflicts serve as openings for al-Qaeda.

The 1990s remind us of the historical terror perspective of how al-Qaeda targets Africa. The U.S. military seized letters in Afghanistan linked to the al-Qaeda African Corps activity in Somalia prior to and following the U.S. withdrawal in 1994. Osama bin Laden fled Afghanistan in 1996 to find a haven in Sudan and establish businesses fronting the al-Qaeda movement. Two years later, on August 7, 1998, midmorning explosions killed 213 people, 12 of whom were U.S. citizens, at the U.S. embassy in Kenya, and 11 people at the U.S. embassy in Tanzania. (Kansteiner, 2001)

On August 20, 1998, President Clinton directed U.S. military forces to attack a terrorist training complex in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical factory in Sudan believed to be associated with chemical weapons manufacturing. The U.S. Navy, operating in the Arabian Sea and the Red Sea, launched 75 or more Tomahawk cruise missiles at the targets.

The government of Sudan condemned the attack and accused the U.S. government of aggression. Sudanese Government officials took reporters on a tour of the destroyed site to support their claim that the facility only produced legal drugs.

Thousands of Sudanese, encouraged by government officials, took to the streets of Khartoum to protest the U.S. strike. Critics in the U.S. accused the Clinton administration of attacking the wrong targets. U.S. officials backed off from their initial claim that Osama bin Laden was associated with the bombed facility, but maintained the facility was associated with the manufacturing of chemical weapons. (Dagne, 2004)

Secretary of Defense William Cohen wrote that the Afghan-Sudan strikes not only were retaliation for the embassy bombings but were also part of a long-term plan to fight terrorism. (Kansteiner, 2001)

In a letter to Congress, President Clinton wrote, “United States acted in exercise of our inherent right of self-defense consistent with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.”

On October 7, 1998, U.S. prosecutors indicted four suspects in federal court on charges related to the Nairobi bombing. Two of the men were arrested in Kenya and sent to the U.S., and another was arrested in Texas. On November 4, 1998, a federal grand jury in New York returned a 238-count indictment against Osama bin Laden. Authorities placed Osama bin Laden on the U.S. most wanted list after charging him with the embassy bombings. (Dagne, 2004, p. 1)

In late May 2001, a federal grand jury convicted four men for the embassy bombings and sentenced them to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Seventeen more persons received indictments, nine are still at large, two died in attacks by coalition forces, and six remain in custody awaiting trial.

On September 11, 2001, an estimated 25 Africans from 13 different African countries died in the World Trade Center. African reactions to the terrorist attacks supported the U.S. response. Many African leaders offered immediate support to combat terrorism. South African President Thabo Mbeki said, "The South African government unreservedly denounces these senseless and horrific terrorist attacks and joins the world in denouncing these dastardly acts." (Dagne, 2004, p. 2)

The leader of Sudan's National Islamic Front government, President Omar el-Bashir, who provided a haven to Osama bin Laden between 1991 and 1996, condemned the terrorist attacks and expressed his government's readiness to cooperate in fighting terrorism. (Dagne, 2004, p. 3)

However, some celebrations existed among Muslim militants in northern Nigeria in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. In Mogadishu, Somalia thousands of people took to the streets in support of Osama bin Laden and burned American and Israeli flags. Somalia's government condemned the terrorist bombings in New York and Washington but did nothing to prevent the demonstrations. (Kansteiner, 2001)

Terrorist activity is only intensifying and many feel a new combatant command will ease the burdens of the current commands and the people of Africa who hope for peace and prosperity. According to the Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism (2007), 733 terrorist incidents occurred in Africa from 1990 until present, resulting in 8,602 injuries, and 2,963 fatalities. Terrorists will continue to use population areas with low income to expand their recruitment campaigns. They will also seek geographical areas with horrid conditions to conceal their training camps throughout the continent. The USAFRICOM will seek out terrorist cells despite the conditions. The command will protect U.S. interests through strengthening relationships with African leaders and by honoring the U.S. commitments with actions.

**Humanitarian Issues**

The USAFRICOM must understand the history of African nations to better formulate a vision and mission statement. Throughout the centuries, Africa has been a hotbed for tension and instability within the world. As early as the late 1500's, many Africans made their living selling men, women, and children of rival tribes into slavery to foreigners from Europe as well as North and South America.(Hallett, 1970) Many considered the selling a form of genocide against their own people. African tribes resorted to murder after the banning of slavery, and in many cases promoted extermination or genocide to gain power, continue old disputes, eliminate rivals, and settle old scores. (Davidson, 1961)

One of the most publicized incidents of genocide occurred when Hutu militias killed more than 500,000 Tutsi citizens in Rwanda. However, was this just indiscriminant genocide of individuals of different cultures? Not many individuals are privy to the Burundian massacre of Hutu citizens in 1972. The

Burundian military comprised 20% of the population and was mainly Tutsi led. The Burundian president (who was Tutsi), using the reasoning of quelling a military coup, employed his Army to begin extermination of the Hutu elite. Five months later, an estimate of nearly 300,000 Hutus were massacred. Many of these Hutu refugees fled to Zaire, Tunisia, and ultimately Rwanda. (Mamdani, 2001)

The killing of a conservative estimate of over 100,000 Kurds in Iraq brought Sudam Hussein and most of his regime to their deaths and was complimented by a U.S. invasion to seek out WMD. Would EUCOM intervene if a nation's government in its purview began slaughtering people by the thousands? The answer is probably yes if not absolutely, and a coalition force of overwhelming magnitude would probably accompany the command's lead. USAFRICOM should bear the expectancy to support and defend innocent people across the continent.

Today, in an effort by Muslim extremists to spread their influence and power throughout the continent, the tide of violence is changing. For instance, Darfur experienced one of the worse cases of recent genocide in 13 years. Since 2003, Muslim extremists have murdered more than 200,000 individuals of the African descent while over 2,000,000 others remain displaced in refugee camps. (United Nations [U.N.] Refugee Agency, 2007)

Estimates state hundreds of refugee camps exist on the African continent. Individuals and their families live and die daily in horrid conditions. Those who live through the turmoil often live in the same conditions for months and, in many instances, years on end.

Even in refugee camps, the individual is not safe from death, exploitation, and recruitment into local militias. African refugee camps are places of insecurity and danger for refugees and relief workers. The camps serve as an essential element of humanitarian efforts, however, they need security in order to ensure the safety of people living and working in the camps. During the past few decades, the focus of the international humanitarian response is to emphasize assistance at the expense of protection. (Jacobsen, 1999)

In 2002, the United Nations investigated allegations of underage sex scandals. According to a BBC News Publications report (BBC, 2002), many children under the age of 18 were sexually abused and exploited by relief workers. The parents would agree to this in exchange for supplies and money to feed the family. More than 40 separate agencies were implicated and 60 relief workers received indictments.

Many refugees corroborated the allegations. Forty-year-old Helen Kamara, a refugee in Freetown, told the South African Press Association (March 1, 2002) that "the secretary-general of our camp once told me that if I did not make love to him or give him one of my seven girls aged between 22 years and seven months, they would not supply us with food." Monrovia's *The News* (March 1, 2002) quoted another refugee in Sierra Leone saying, "If you do not have a wife or daughter to offer...it is hard to have access to aid." (Chonghaile, 2002)

Many other tragedies occur due to a lack of adequate sustenance and

medical supplies intercepted by the ever-growing bands of local militia. The control that many of these groups have on the host nation is appalling. In a desperate effort to feed their families, males indoctrinate into local militias. Thousand of these bands are ultimately the cause of widespread fear, death, and destruction within the continent. The USAFRICOM must assist African people in creating strong governments, which focus on the welfare, security, and care of all its citizens. In addition to national government support, USAFRICOM must commit to providing protection to local communities suffering from insecurity.

**Objectives for USAFRICOM**

The U.S.'s major objective in USAFRICOM should always be to establish a base of operations for combating terrorism and torment within the continent. Ultimately, democratic and sovereign governments must form within many or all the major African countries. The USAFRICOM must lead the world in collectively promoting health, education, democracy, and economic growth in order for democracy to flourish. Africa is one of the most important and overlooked regions in the world. With its strategic importance, natural resources, extremely large population and potential, Africa is well worth the challenges faced by USAFRICOM.

> The draft DoD mission statement (U.S. Department of Defense, February2007, p.5) states: USAFRICOM promotes U.S. National Security objectives by working with African states and regional organizations to help strengthen stability and security in the AOR. USAFRICOM leads the in-theater DoD response to support other U.S. government agencies in implementing U.S. government security policies and strategies. USAFRICOM works with other government agencies to conduct theater security cooperation activities, assist in building to improve security capacity, and improve governing. As directed USAFRICOM conducts military operations to deter aggression and respond to crises.
>
> LTG Walter Sharp, director of the joint staff said, "The missions USAFRICOM will perform will be non-kinetic, such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. USAFRICOM will have a strong emphasis on building the capacity of African nations through training and equipping African militaries, conducting training and medical missions on the continent, and supporting regional organizations like the African Union". (Wood, 2007)
>
> Mr. Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, pointed out that USAFRICOM will be unique in the amount of interagency cooperation involved. The command's headquarters will include representatives from the State Department and other government agencies, and DoD will work closely with the African nations in developing the structure of the command and possible missions, he said. (Wood, 2007)

**Counterpoints**

The idea of having a unified command to cover Africa appears to be a noble

cause but skeptics will argue its creation based on the following counter-points: 1. The creation of another command is a wasteful use of resources.; 2. The U.S. is building an empire to protect its African oil resources.; 3. The U.S. occupation in Africa is unacceptable to some countries.

The question is where do the resources come from for the formation of the African Command? While we await a clear answer, we can safely predict the building of a multi-million dollar headquarters somewhere in a host African country. A tentative headquarters located in Stuttgart, Germany will organize the multi-million dollar endeavor. The financial cost of establishing an African military presence will be high. The larger U.S. issue, in the long-term, is: what will be the cost of continuing to apply band-aid solutions to issues as they arise in Africa? We will talk about the need for non-military solutions, for economic development, improved health care and support for democracy; but after the ribbons are cut, will our selfless service shine through for the African people?

The U.S. claims the main purpose of establishing the African Command is to fight the war on terror and provide humanitarian aid. Some African countries, however, believe the U.S. has other motives. The Algerian minister of state and foreign affairs, questioned why no one had ever proposed anti-terror cooperation with Algeria in the 1990s when terrorist violence went rampant? Others question not only Algeria, but also other significant accounts of terrorism and genocide many feel the U.S. avoided. Some analysts contend that a desire to control the flow of African oil is the main objective behind the new strategic interest in Africa. (Klare, 2005)

An editorial carried by a Gabonese newspaper has appealed to African countries to say "no" to USAFRICOM and the construction of any U.S. military facility on the African continent. Algeria has already announced its refusal to allow the U.S. Africa Command to locate within its territories.

Even as the U.S. asserts military forces to combat terrorist activities, African countries are still concerned that the US African Command could become a destabilizing factor in their countries instead of helping to uproot terrorism.

While counter-points exist to argue the justification of a USAFRICOM, President Bush approved the formation of the command on 07 February 2007. The USAFRICOM can be a voice and actionable presence for all seeking democracy, human rights, and discouraging radical terrorists who seek to destroy life.

**Conclusion**

The creation of USAFRICOM absorbs the partial responsibilities of three existing combatant commands, oversees a continent home for terrorists, and takes on the responsibility of humanitarian efforts in the 54 African countries. USAFRICOM must be dedicated to principals and help a continent in desperate need of democracy, security, economic relief, and human rights reform.

USAFRICOM must be a visible presence in the eastern hemisphere, in order to chart the road map needed for stability and peace. The U.S. must

assist the command in enacting strong sanctions against terrorist supportive nations; oversee international forces involved in peacekeeping operations; ensure U.N. actions such as no-fly zones are implemented; and forcefully respond to governments who choose to murder their own innocent people. Africa, while notably filled with despair, is a continent filled with hopeful people and resources to better their standard of living. USAFRICOM is hope to many people. The command's actions based on its vision and values will be USAFRICOM's measure of success.

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# Ethics Essays

Retaliatory Killing in the Combat Environment

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# Retaliatory Killings in the Combat Environment

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**Abstract**

*Soldiers are taught a sense of brotherhood or sisterhood throughout the course of their careers. This bond is much stronger when Soldiers share the experience of combat together. When we lose a fellow Soldier in combat, it naturally evokes a very strong emotional response. Soldiers want revenge for the loss of their fallen comrade and unless leaders at all levels are prepared, Soldiers could violate the Laws of War to get vengeance for their fellow Soldier who paid the ultimate price. Leaders must find ways to control their own emotions while redirecting their Soldiers' emotions toward the legal and morally right accomplishment of the mission.*

## Retaliatory Killings in the Combat Environment

One thing that is universal among Soldiers who have served in combat is the love they share for their brothers and sisters in arms. This bond is very strong and is not limited to the military. Police and firefighters also share this love and willingness to die for their comrades. Sharing experiences of a life-threatening nature will form this bond between those who are involved. Countless Soldiers have given their lives in defense of the ideals of our great country but at the moment of truth, it often comes down to something purer and simpler – they give their life for their buddy beside them on the battlefield.

The Army encourages this bond between Soldiers. Throughout the initial and advanced individual training environments, drill sergeants teach Soldiers to work as a team and depend on each other. They teach Soldiers to never leave a fallen comrade. After a Soldier graduates and gets the first duty station, he or she shares many more experiences on a daily basis with other members of the team (unit). This feeling of team and family intensifies exponentially for a Soldier upon deployment to a combat environment due to the 24-hour-a-day contact with unit members. The bond further intensifies with the threat of death during dangerous operations.

When a Soldier dies in combat, emotions of his or her teammates can run the gamut. At first, there is an intense sadness and a sense of loss, which can change in time to a very intense anger and desire for revenge. This change can happen quickly or slowly. Opportunities for revenge are usually hard to come by, and as leaders we have to temper our Soldiers' desires for vengeance with constant training on the rules of engagement.

In conventional force-on-force battles, the enemy is easily defined and

recognized. In unconventional, insurgent and guerilla warfare, the enemy is much more elusive. Insurgents and guerillas will often hide among the civilian population, seeming to disappear as they merge with the locals. This can be a recipe for disaster when emotionally charged young Soldiers are faced with an enemy they cannot find hiding in a local population that they perceive to be hiding the enemy.

Most of us have lost loved ones in our lives, maybe a beloved grandparent or even a parent. Usually, we are not present when the death occurs or, if we are, it follows a long illness and occurs in a hospital or other similar environment. Still, the impact on us can be very emotional. We are saddened by the loss of our loved one which can often turn to anger as we question the meaning of life. When a death happens suddenly and violently, the effect is more dramatic. The difference between the expected loss of a grandparent and the unexpected loss of a brother or sister in combat is that in combat we have an enemy to focus our anger on. Further multiplying the effect is the horrible ways that Soldiers often die in combat. A Soldier may have to hear the death screams of a comrade and watch them bleed out in front of them. The emotional impact can be unbelievably hard to take.

As Soldiers, we expect combat losses. However, when the losses occur during an insurgent encounter and there is no conventional enemy to focus the inevitable anger on, frustration sets in. There is pain inside that has to be dealt with. To further compound these feelings, Soldiers are expected to move in an urban environment, searching for the insurgents among the local population. They may start to feel that all the locals are involved and are hiding the enemy who took the life of their beloved comrade in such a horrible manner. The anger becomes too much to deal with and the Soldier may take out his or her anger and pain on innocent locals.

Unit leaders cannot allow this to happen. No matter how emotionally charged they may be, they have to be the voices of reason. The desire for vengeance is a natural human emotion, and a very powerful one. Leaders have to rise above their emotions and the emotions of their units and control the Soldiers they lead. They have to redirect their energy towards catching the people who are actually responsible.

This is an ethical dilemma that has faced Soldiers since the beginning of warfare. The emotions involved in the death of a beloved comrade make this an especially difficult issue for unit leaders to handle. All Soldiers feel the affects of the loss of a member of their unit, but unit commanders and leaders often take it even harder. They take it harder because they feel responsible for the safety of all the members of their unit. Still, these same leaders have to temper the reactions of the Soldiers and redirect them toward a positive response. This characteristic separates our Soldiers from many of our adversaries.

Some of us can only imagine the emotions involved in moving into a civilian area to search for the enemy responsible for the death of your comrade only a short time before; others have lived it. As the Soldiers question the local personnel, no one will admit to seeing anything or knowing where the insurgents

have gone. Maybe if the Soldiers take one of the local citizens out into the street and rough him up a little, the others will be more willing to talk. They do not need to kill the citizen or even cause serious injury, just rough him up a little. What is the harm? The harm is that once the line is crossed, there is no turning back. The small amount of planned violence combined with the extraordinarily high level of pint up emotions can quickly lead to an escalation that ends with a dead citizen. Leaders have to keep a cool head and strictly observe the rules of engagement.

Another factor to consider is the situation of the population in the area of operations. After the unit completes the patrol in the area, they will move to another area, leaving the locals to fend for themselves. The insurgents, if they are operating in the area, have most likely threatened the local population with death and torture if they assist the Americans. Locals not only have to worry about themselves, but their families and extended families as well. Many may very well want to tell the emotionally distraught Soldiers where the insurgents went or when they will be back, but they fear for their own lives. They may sincerely not know how to help. If we American Soldiers start using the same intimidation tactics as the insurgents, what separates us from them?

American Soldiers live by "The Soldier's Creed." One of the tenants of the creed states, "I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I serve the American people and live the Army Values." (Larsen, M., 2003) One of the seven core Army Values is Integrity. Integrity means to do what is right both legally and morally. (Field Manual No. 6-22, 2006) There is no manual or creed that states, "…unless you are really mad or emotionally distraught over the loss of a comrade." The willingness to respect our Army Values is what sets us apart from the insurgent enemy that we currently face. Our adherence to Army Values makes us a superior fighting force without being barbaric. For this reason, we can stick out our chest, hold our heads high, and proudly say, "I am an American Soldier, and I am Army Strong."

Seeing a comrade die in combat will always be a traumatic experience for any Soldier, as it should be. We are brothers and sisters in arms. We hold each other's lives in our hands. The bonds we develop through our service are precious to our hearts and will last throughout our lives. The comrades we lose in combat are giving their lives in defense of the freedoms that we, as Americans, hold dear. We must honor the memory of our fallen comrades by remembering who we are and what we stand for. We are American Soldiers. We are members of a team. We serve the people of the United States and we live the Army Values. (Field Manual No. 6-22, 2006)

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# The Ethical Dilemma of Sending Overweight Soldiers into Combat

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**Abstract**

*We face an ethical dilemma when we retain overweight Soldiers to perform duties in combat. The Army can no longer depend on an antiquated system of guidelines to evaluate the combat readiness of today's Soldiers. The Army must tie a Soldier's physical and mental capabilities to the evaluation process and not allow the body fat standard to be the sole purpose for rendering a Soldier combat-ineffective. This paper includes a recommendation for a change in determining whether a Soldier is fit for combat.*

## The Ethical Dilemma of Sending Overweight Soldiers into Combat

Much has changed in the Army since Sept. 11, 2001. In the last seven years, the Army has had difficulties maintaining recruitment numbers and sustaining the readiness of the force. This enormous pressure on the Army has caused senior leadership to make personnel decisions in the "gray area" based a need for Soldiers on the battlefield. Many understand the critical role the Army plays in support of the national military strategy by responding to a wide range of crises and missions abroad and at home. The requirement for an increased number of personnel in the Army has never been more important. We face an ethical dilemma when we retain overweight Soldiers to perform duties in combat and are in need of an effective change in determining whether a Soldier is fit for combat.

Before beginning a discussion about this subject, it is important to address why this topic is relevant. While no leaders believe in an unfit Army, some place less emphasis on a Soldier's appearance and overall fitness. It can be argued that good physical fitness has a direct impact on a Soldier's combat readiness. The many battles that American troops have fought underscore the important role physical fitness plays on the battlefield. Such a topic must be addressed because the Army has issued leaders a set of rules that they must abide by to define the overall fitness of Soldiers and determine whether Soldiers are fit to perform wartime duties. So far, leaders have been in the "gray area" on this topic. The only one suffering from these unclear guidelines is the American Soldier. This lack of clear-cut guidelines puts senior leaders and the Army in an ethical dilemma.

## Overweight Soldiers in Combat

Army Regulation 600-9, The Army Weight Control Program (1987), states

that its primary objective is to ensure all personnel are able to meet the physical demands of their duties under combat conditions. This sounds clear-cut to some, but it is not that simple. For example, once a Soldier is confirmed as being overweight, he or she is enrolled in the Army Weight Control Program (AWCP). After being counseled and put in the program, the Soldier is flagged in accordance with Army Regulation 600-8-2, Suspension of Favorable Personnel Actions (2005), and possibly barred from reenlistment. Once a Soldier is flagged, he or she is not eligible to attend military courses or receive tuition assistance for civilian education, be promoted, receive an award or decoration, assume command, reenlist or extend service time.

However, when it comes to sending Soldiers into combat to risk their lives for their country, suddenly weight is no longer an issue. Many Soldiers currently serving in the Global War on Terrorism were enrolled in AWCP before deploying. Is it okay to send an overweight Soldier to war, but not allow him or her to receive any favorable actions during or after his or her tour of duty? This is the ethical dilemma for senior leaders and the Army. This issue is bothersome to senior leaders because it involves our greatest asset, the American Soldier.

What message are we sending to our Soldiers when we, as leaders, ignore the rules to the point of forcing such an ethical dilemma within our organization? Do we truly value our Soldiers?

While serving in Iraq, I overheard a sergeant major discussing the issue of overweight Soldiers in combat with one of his assigned first sergeants. The first sergeant complained about some Soldiers becoming overweight during their tour. The sergeant major was not very happy about the first sergeant's comments and made the following statement: "First sergeant, several days ago we lost a Soldier on a convoy due to the detonation of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). This Soldier was in the AWCP before deploying and we posthumously awarded him the Purple Heart and Bronze Star." Of course, this set the first sergeant back and made him think about his opinion and the lack of importance leaders give to a Soldier's weight during such trying times.

The sergeant's major comment also made me think about my opinion of the Soldiers who were enrolled in the AWCP before deployment. I came to only one conclusion; Army regulations need to be changed to give leaders a fair assessment tool of who is fit for combat duties. We can no longer let such an antiquated way of thinking shape our Army. Some have asked, if overweight Soldiers can perform their duties in garrison why not send them into combat? If this view is the deciding factor, then why suspend a Soldier from receiving favorable actions as required in AR 600-8-2 (2005)? The most important consideration is not whether a Soldier can complete the mission in garrison; it is whether a Soldier can complete the mission in combat. A fair evaluation must be made of his or her physical ability before sending the Soldier to combat.

**Proposed Change**

Retired Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack Tilley attempted to publish a new AR 600-9, which tied the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) to the Army weight

control standards. This publication was produced in draft form for review by senior leaders in the Army but was never approved. It is in the best interest of the Army to tie a Soldier's physical ability to the Army's weight control standards. If a Soldier can score 70 or 80 percent in every category on the APFT, he or she should be considered physically fit and there is no need to flag that Soldier for failure to meet the body fat standards as depicted in AR 600-9. Tilley's proposed regulation needs to be revived and adopted.

## Conclusion

The Global War on Terrorism has brought about many changes for the Army, including a broader range of responsibilities and risks. Soldier readiness is imperative if we are going to stay combat ready. Therefore, we must refocus our efforts on our greatest asset, the American Soldier. We can no longer depend on an antiquated system of guidelines to evaluate the combat readiness of today's Soldiers. We must tie a Soldier's physical capabilities to the evaluation process and not allow the Army's body fat standards to be the sole criteria for rendering a Soldier combat-ineffective. We must create a more comprehensive guide for determining combat fitness by tying the APFT to the Army's weight standards. This will provide leaders with a better assessment of a Soldier's physical ability to perform at their current weight.

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# Applying Ethics Every Day

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**Abstract**

*Leaders in the U.S. Army, both commissioned and noncommissioned officers, have a tremendous responsibility to make ethical decisions every day. When ethics are pushed to the side in day-to-day decisions, leaders fail to set good ethical examples for their Soldiers, who then follow in their footsteps. Leaders must serve as positive role models and help develop their Soldiers into ethical warriors to ensure that today's Soldiers are equipped to make sound ethical decisions regardless of the situation in which they find themselves.*

## Applying Ethics Every Day

There is a serious problem facing the Army today that may come as a surprise to many people. From four star generals down to brand new privates, we're neglecting to apply day-to-day ethics. In the myriad of small, ethical decisions that must be made daily, the line between right and wrong is often blurred. As a result, unethical behavior develops into bad habits that become ingrained in our daily lives. In order to solve this problem, leaders must serve as positive role models for their Soldiers and develop their subordinates into leaders with character.

## Background

Many people assume ethical decisions are those made only when the stakes are high. A common example is the behavior of Soldiers at Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq, which resulted in a worldwide scandal for both the U.S. Army and the United States. It also brought lengthy prison sentences for the Soldiers involved.

However, what many leaders forget is that ethical decisions do not just occur in a hostile environment: they occur every day and in every location. The small, seemingly unimportant, decisions leaders make every day serve as the foundation for the major ethical decisions that may confront them or their Soldiers at some time in their lives. Russell Gough in 1998 offered a similar opinion on this concept:

> In other words, it's not as though most of us are confronted on a daily basis with complex and controversial dilemmas – like mind-boggling and heart-wrenching life and death issues – that are beyond our immediate ethical comprehension. What typically is the rule in our daily lives is not a matter of knowing what is right and good but having the character to do what is right and good. (p. 54)

**Serving as Role Models**

Leaders, both commissioned and noncommissioned officers, must have strong, moral character to serve as ethical role models for their Soldiers. Every Soldier who enters the Army comes from a different background and brings, with him or her, a unique set of experiences, values and beliefs. Soldiers often enter at a young age, while they are still in the process of defining their own character. Therefore, leaders play an important role in shaping young Soldiers into ethical warriors. Gough (1998) emphasized the importance of setting a good example.

> You do not have to be a Socrates, a Mother Teresa, a Billy Graham, a Martin Luther King Jr., a Mahatma Gandhi, or an Albert Schweitzer to take seriously the degree to which the actions flowing from your own character, for better or worse, can and do powerfully influence those around you. You influence those living with you, working with you, playing with you, watching you, listening to you, and sitting next to you and those whom you would never dreamed of influencing. (p. 111)

One common ethical failure is when leaders hold Soldiers to a different standard than themselves. An example of this is leaders who demand Soldiers be on time and threaten to punish them when they are late, but do not feel obligated to meet the same time demands. This action teaches Soldiers that rules apply only to those of lower rank.

Unfortunately, leaders set bad ethical examples for their Soldiers every day throughout the Army when they violate uniform regulations, fraternize with Soldiers in their command, falsify Temporary Duty (TDY) orders, commit Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) fraud, misuse travel cards, call in sick when they are not, commit safety violations, talk badly about superiors, take credit for subordinates' work, or treat people differently based on gender, race, religion or rank. Many times, leaders do not realize that Soldiers watch their behavior and emulate it, thus continuing the cycle of unethical behavior.

Most people do not set out to make unethical decisions. The problem comes when there is a conflict between what is right and what is desired. According to Gough (1998), people don't break rules or laws because everyone else is breaking them; instead, people break rules or laws in order to get something they want.

When leaders sacrifice what is right in order to gain what they want, they not only make unethical decisions, but they also fail to live by the Warrior Ethos. *Army Leadership* (2006) states, "The Warrior Ethos requires unrelenting and consistent determination to do what is right and to do it with pride across the full range of military operations" (p. 4-12).

In addition, leaders who do not establish good ethical standards create a negative environment in their office, team or unit. This destroys morale, cohesion and *esprit de corps* among their Soldiers. In such a negative environment, it is impossible to foster ethical conduct in future leaders.

**Developing Leaders of Character**

Leaders, whether they want to or not, serve as ethical role models. But, leaders also have a responsibility to develop their Soldiers into leaders of character. *Army Leadership* (2006) provides the following guidance for leaders:

> Becoming a person of character and a leader of character is a career-long process involving day-to-day experience, education, self-development, developmental counseling, coaching, and mentoring. While individuals are responsible for their own character development, leaders are responsible for encouraging, supporting and assessing the efforts of their people. (p. 4-12)

Leaders must constantly monitor, assess and provide feedback to their Soldiers regarding their everyday ethical decisions. The Warrior Ethos and the Army Values – loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage – can provide a strong foundation in that process. Those Soldiers who consistently make ethical decisions on a day-to-day basis are more likely to make ethical decisions when the stakes are higher, such as in a hostile environment.

Another key to developing leaders of character is to teach Soldiers to take responsibility for their actions. When Soldiers make unethical decisions, they need to take responsibility for their actions and blame no one else. Leaders must serve as role models in this aspect. Gough (1998) supports this notion.

> "As long as we continue to blame others instead of assuming responsibility ourselves, there will be no meaningful and enduring change for the better – neither in our personal lives nor in the society generally" (p. 156).

Change does need to be made. We are an Army at war, and leaders of character are more important than ever. As shown throughout military history, unethical decisions can hinder mission accomplishment, damage world opinion and even cost lives.

**Conclusion**

Every ethical decision, no matter how small, matters. When ethics are pushed aside in the pursuit of personal agendas, the effect can snowball, leading to ethical disasters such as the Abu Ghraib Prison scandal. Leaders in today's Army must take seriously their daily responsibility to serve as ethical role models for their Soldiers. In addition, leaders must help their Soldiers become ethical warriors who are able to make ethical decisions every day in every situation. Gough (1998) summed up the absolute necessity for ethics in our government, which the military represents, when he stated:

> Nobody knew this better than our country's founding fathers, who were keenly aware of the essential value of personal ethics and character, a point they gave great emphasis to in *The Federalist Papers*, a brilliant set of essays written in 1787-88 in defense of the Constitution. Their passionate

> plea was, and still is, that if the wondrous political experiment called democracy is to succeed, it will require more than any form of government
>
> a higher degree of 'virtue' – of ethical character – in its citizens. (p. xxii)

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# Argumentative Essays

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# The Role of the Media in Military History

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**Abstract**

*In the Global War on Terrorism, we must take the time to study our past to avoid repeating mistakes in the future. Our Soldiers are not fighting our grandfathers' wars. Our battlefield is unconventional and our enemies are using all of the tools at their disposal. One of those tools is the media, and it plays a major role in all armed conflicts. The modern media bombards the public with dramatic and negative aspects of the conflict, withering public resolve. Experiences from Vietnam, Somalia and Iraq shape our modern battlefield and the changing landscape of contemporary warfare. The modern media is a major aspect of that landscape and can be just as vicious as any enemy we face.*

## The Importance of Studying Military History

A simple picture, video clip or editorial can have an enormous impact on the psyche of the populace. Constant negative images sway opinion, affecting the military's ability to win armed conflicts. During World War II, Joe Rosenthal snapped a picture of U.S. Marines raising a flag atop Mount Suribachi, Iwo Jima on Feb. 23, 1945. "In that moment, Rosenthal's camera recorded the soul of a nation," said editors of U.S. Camera Magazine (Rosenthal, 1945). At that time in history, the images of war were overwhelmingly pro-American and positive, which unified our nation. But the media sword cuts both ways and in modern conflicts, the U.S. Armed Forces have had to deal with the other side of that blade.

In the Global War on Terrorism, enemies of the United States are fighting a media war. One of the terrorists' greatest weapons is their ability to manipulate the media and sway world opinion. The mainstream media's lack of knowledge of the fundamentals of strategy is a windfall of ignorance that aids our enemies. The Vietnam War was the first conflict in which the media's search for the unvarnished truth had dire consequences. The military's ability to be successful in the conflict was severely disabled by the overwhelmingly negative coverage from the press. Media impact has been detrimental in prolonged conflicts since Vietnam.

## Vietnam

In 1968, Walter Cronkite, a commentator for CBS, described the Vietnam War from his editorial desk as "unwinnable." Even today, the Tet offensive is viewed by most Americans as a major defeat and a massive loss for the U.S. Armed Forces. Eddie Adams, a photographer for Associated Press, snapped

a picture of Brig. Gen. Nguyen Ngoc Loan of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam executing a Viet Cong prisoner whose hands were tied behind his back. The photo shocked the world and became a symbol for the anti-war movement. A naked child, running, crying and fleeing from a U.S. napalm strike became synchronous with the moral decay of the war. Photographs of hundreds of dead women, elderly men and children at My Lai massacred by American Soldiers turned into an international scandal and outraged the world.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson sent large numbers of troops to Vietnam. The ensuing conflict was the first "living room war," alluding to the constant TV coverage watched in American living rooms. For years, the Saigon media bureau was the third largest network in the world, after New York and Washington, with five camera crews on duty most of the time (Hallin, 2004). Witnessed by families night after night, the horror of war became disgusting and exhaustive; this barrage of negative images on the populace strengthened the anti-war movement.

During Vietnam, a monumental shift occurred between the U.S. government, military and media. By the end of the 1960s, support for the war had been waning in the United States. The Tet Offensive of 1968 was a series of offensive operations by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese, and by all accounts, was a catastrophic defeat for North Vietnam. Col. Bui Tin, who served on the general staff of the North Vietnamese Army, would later say North Vietnamese losses during Tet "were staggering and a complete surprise" and "our forces in the South were nearly wiped out by all the fighting in 1968." Even after information became available to the media regarding the disastrous losses to our enemy, the media did not correct the perception of an American loss. In *Following Ho Chi Minh*, Tin wrote, "Thanks to the media, which exaggerated the damage caused by this [Tet] offensive, the American public was bedazzled" (Tin, 1995). Walter Cronkite's "unwinnable" statement marked the first time in American history that a news anchor declared the outcome of the war. Johnson is reported to have said, "If I've lost Walter Cronkite, I've lost the country." Soon after Cronkite's report, Johnson dropped out of the 1968 presidential race (Cronkite, 1968).

The photo of Loan executing a Viet Cong prisoner won Adams the 1969 Pulitzer Prize for spot news photography though he later regretted the impact it had. The image became an anti-war icon. Adams later wrote in *Time*:

> The general killed the Viet Cong; I killed the general with my camera. Still photographs are the most powerful weapon in the world. People believe them, but photographs do lie, even without manipulation. They are only half-truths. What the photograph didn't say was, what would you do if you were the general at that time and place on that hot day, and you caught the so-called bad guy after he blew away one, two or three American Soldiers? (Adams, 2001).

The Viet Cong prisoner was an officer in command of an assassination platoon, which on that day had targeted South Vietnamese National Police officers and their families. He was captured near the site of a ditch, which

contained as many as 34 bound and shot bodies of police officers and their relatives. Adams later apologized in person to Loan and his family for the damage it did to his reputation. When Loan died, Adams praised him as a hero of a just cause; "The guy was a hero. America should be crying. How do you know you would not have pulled the trigger yourself?" (Adams, 2001).

The My Lai massacre would become the most regrettable incident of the Vietnam War. For almost a year this incident and its massive media coverage fueled outrage for the anti-war movement, swayed the general public and tainted the entire U.S. Army as being morally bankrupt. The actions of a few became detrimental to the whole. The United States could no longer hold the moral high ground and public support quickly eroded.

There are different opinions as to why the media has shifted the way it covers conflicts. The absolute "why" is heavily debated and unclear. What is absolute and clear is that our enemies now exploit this shift in our media for their advantage.

**Somalia**

Operation Restore Hope was a United Nations-sanctioned U.S. military operation in the Republic of Somalia expected to divert a growing humanitarian crisis in December 1992. After the collapse of Siad Barre's military government, Somalia had become a nation of militant, feuding warlords with the general population suffering massive famine, lawlessness and anarchy. On Oct. 4, 1993, America would wake up to the horror of CNN video footage of a naked U.S. Soldier's corpse being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu, Somalia. The body was dragged past mobs of Somali citizens venting their hatred by spitting, stoning and kicking the corpse. Americans would later find out that 18 other U.S. Soldiers were killed and 73 wounded in what would become known as the Battle for Mogadishu.

The images created a firestorm of public debate. Americans wondered how a humanitarian mission to feed starving Somalis ended up with the death of so many U.S. Soldiers. The vivid hatred displayed by the Somalis toward the corpse of the dead Soldier captivated and confused the American public. "Americans were horrified by the sight of a dead American being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu," explained Former Chairman to the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell in his autobiography. "We had been drawn into this place by television images; now we were being repelled by them" (Powell, 1995). The consequence of this debacle was public outcry due to the horrific images and the policy that followed was completely media driven. U.S. Soldiers were ordered to pull out of Somalia due to the growing pressure back in the United States. U.N. security forces followed shortly thereafter.

The impact of that fateful decision would not be known for several years. On a mountain top camp in Southern Afghanistan in 1998, ABC reporter John Miller interviewed a little-known terrorist named Osama Bin Laden. Miller asked, "Describe the situation when your men took down the American forces in Somalia?" Bin Laden replied, "As I said, our boys were shocked by the low

morale of the American Soldier and they realized that the American Soldier was just a paper tiger. He was unable to endure the strikes that were dealt to his army, so he fled, and America had to stop all its bragging." He added, "After a few blows, it forgot all about those titles and rushed out of Somalia in shame and disgrace, dragging the bodies of its Soldiers" (Miller, 1998).

**Iraq**

Since the toppling of Saddam Hussein in April 2003, media coverage of the U.S. military's efforts in Iraq have rapidly eroded. The Center for Media and Public Affairs made a nonpartisan evaluation of network news broadcasts. During the initial push into Baghdad to topple Saddam Hussein, 51 percent of the reports on the conflict were negative. Six months after the land battle ended, 77 percent were negative. In the 2004 general election, 89 percent were negative. By the spring of 2006, 94 percent were negative. This decline in media support was much faster than during Korea or Vietnam (Wilson, 2007).

The media's importance in the current Global War on Terrorism is immense, though often unnoticed. The enemy, unable to win battles using conventional warfare tactics, uses the media to fight more important battles; the most important of these battles being for public and world opinion, support, and sympathy. Terrorists and the Iraqi insurgency rely heavily on the media. On Oct. 18, 2006, CNN aired an Iraqi sniper video on "Anderson Cooper 360." The video, narrated by Baghdad correspondent Michael Ware, showed Iraqi snipers killing U.S. Soldiers. CNN's ignorance or misguided attempt to be unvarnished played right into the hands of the terrorists. Juba, the commander of the Sniper Brigade in Baghdad stated the importance of the video and its airing on CNN; "The idea of filming the operation is very important, because the scene that shows the falling Soldier when he is hit has more impact on the enemy than any other weapon, especially after we saw the great concern of the enemy and the western media" (Juba, 2006).

As the political debate over Iraq continued to gather steam, Matt Lauer of NBC's Today Show, on Nov. 27, 2006, officially announced that the Iraq war, from that point, would be referred to as a civil war (Lauer, 2006). For three days, across the entire media spectrum, the pundits, political leaders and bloggers debated the definition of civil war. "If all parties are involved in the political process, how can it be a civil war?" asked many pundits. Within days of the media-driven civil war debate in the United States, Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, head of the Imam Al-Mahdi Army militia and a prominent figure in the Iraqi parliament, stated he was pulling his group out of the political process. The media is now shaping foreign policy by providing the enemy with strategies for victory.

**Conclusion**

Reporting without responsibility and education is detrimental to our nation's ability to win wars. Rather than referring to our enemies as anti-American or anti-capitalists, we should define them correctly as anti-freedom and anti-life.

Once defined correctly, the media's propensity to morally equivocate allies and enemies should stop. The media has limited understanding of military strategy, which can contribute to reporting errors. Reporters consistently confuse casualties with strategic losses. There is not one battle that the United States has lost in Iraq or Afghanistan. Yet, with the current media standards, winning battles in Iraq becomes irrelevant. The focus is on shaping perceptions. The insurgency, with the help of the media, has been effective in its attempt to sway world opinion. Iraq is now labeled with terms such as quagmire, defeat, losing the peace and civil war. Even after successes in Iraq, such as the capture of Saddam Hussein and the killing of Abu Musab al Zarqawi, terrorists can expect the pessimistic reporting to dominate good news, resulting in the destruction of our will to continue the fight.

Does terrorism even exist without the media? Terrorism targets the audience more than it does its victim. Our media, intentionally or not, empowers and encourages acts of terrorism by covering the dramatic images of terrorist acts and allows terrorists to gain the coverage they covet. America's 24-hour news coverage essentially aids the enemy by running and rerunning dramatic footage, especially in the absence of other news stories. David Broder, the reputed Washington Post reporter, suggested that, "the essential ingredient of any effective antiterrorist policy must be the denial to the terrorist of access to mass media outlets." He stated this before the 24-hour news cycle, in a different time, almost 20 years ago (Felling, 2004). It still holds true today.

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# The Battle of Khe Sanh
## *Avoiding history's combat failures*

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**Abstract**

*Military leaders must have a working knowledge of history. The past is marked by hundreds of examples of lost battles and failed military leaders. In many cases, their failure can be directly attributed to a lack of knowledge about their enemy. Knowledge of the past is often the key to winning battles in the present. Few battles are without historical precedent and leaders must understand the past so that they may avoid mistakes and ensure success. American Soldiers can learn much from the recent military history of the Middle East, North Africa and Southeast Asia. Although hundreds of American examples can be cited, this paper will focus on the Battle of Khe Sanh during the war in Vietnam. At Khe Sanh American Marines repeated the mistakes of the French at Dien Bien Phu 13 years earlier. Like Dien Bien Phu, Khe Sanh contributed to the loss of a war in Vietnam by a western power. This battle illustrates the reason why Soldiers must have a solid knowledge of history.*

### Avoiding history's combat failures

Many comparisons can be made between the American battle at Khe Sanh in 1967-68 and the French battle at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. There are similarities in strategy, tactics, political concerns and the serious lack of understanding of the Vietnamese people. For all of its frustration with the French during the Indochina War, the United States would commit many of the same military and political blunders the French did. Nowhere was this more obvious than during the occupation and defense of Khe Sanh.

Only the massive use of airpower prevented the American forces from suffering the same fate as the defenders of Dien Bien Phu. "By the end of 1967, U.S. intelligence indicated that elements of three North Vietnamese Army divisions were in the Khe Sanh sector. Since the late summer or early fall, NVA (North Vietnamese Army) forces had successfully cut Route 9 and the only means of re-supply for the base was by air" (Commentary, 1999, p. 1).

Khe Sanh, like Dien Bien Phu, was garrisoned because it was located near major supply routes of the North Vietnamese. In both cases, a decision was made to occupy the sites despite their vulnerability to enemy artillery fire. This was even more the case at Khe Sanh where there were far fewer obstacles preventing the North Vietnamese from massing their firepower than at Dien Bien Phu. Although the United States had airpower and France did not, it showed the same arrogant disrespect for enemy capabilities. This would prove to be a

serious mistake and a source of embarrassment.

The Tet Offensive of 1968 caught the United States by surprise. No one believed North Vietnamese and Viet Cong troops were capable of such a massive and coordinated offensive. In most places the offensive was a costly failure. However, the same can not be said of Khe Sanh.

"During the summer of 1967, the North Vietnamese and NLF (National Liberstion Front or Viet Cong) decided on a change of strategy, a 'general offensive, general uprising' to achieve decisive victory" (Herring, 2002, p. 226). "The politburo began developing plans to implement the new strategy. To lure the U.S. troops from the major population centers and maintain heavy casualties, a number of large-scale diversionary attacks would be launched in remote areas" (Herring, pp. 226-227). "Two North Vietnamese divisions laid siege to the Marine garrison at Khe Sanh near the Laotian border" (Herring, p. 227).

> "The sudden, massive siege of Khe Sanh [early in 1968] stunned the nation, and reminded many Americans, including the Johnson administration, of the humiliating defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu 14 years earlier. In his typical Texas way, Johnson tells one of his advisors, 'I don't want any damn Din Bin Phoo.' The siege would play to a massive audience on American television each night for the next few months, proving the enemy's resolve to win the struggle"
> (Siege of Khe Sanh, n.d., p. 1).

The administration wanted desperately to avoid a comeuppance because the United States had poured out so much scorn upon the French after their defeat.

"The first phase of the plan worked to perfection. By the end of 1967, the attention of Gen. Westmoreland, the president, and indeed much of the nation was riveted on Khe Sanh. Insisting that the fortress be held at all costs, President Johnson kept close watch on the battle with a terrain map in the White House war room. Westmoreland sent 6,000 Soldiers to defend the garrison, and B-52s carried out the heaviest air raids in the history of warfare, eventually dropping more than 100,000 tons of explosives on a five-square-mile battlefield" (Herring, 2002, p. 228).

The Americans had indeed been drawn away from population centers and chaos reigned. "Despite the array of U.S. firepower, the specter of Dien Bien Phu was to haunt Johnson and his personal advisers throughout the siege, a fear reinforced by press analogies to the French experience" (Shuliman, 1996, pp. 264-5). American Marines had been assigned to defend an untenable piece of terrain just like the French before them. The Marine garrison of 6,000 men was surrounded by 20,000 North Vietnamese. These odds were roughly comparable to the 13,000 Frenchmen that were surrounded by 50,000 Vietminh at Dien Bien Phu. The Marines suffered under relentless artillery and mortar fire as had the French. Like the French, the Americans slaughtered the enemy in open combat, but just as they had done at Dien Bien Phu, the North Vietnamese kept coming.

"Despite the fact that Khe Sanh was encircled by enemy troops, the U.S. Defense Department claimed that the fortress blocked five avenues of infiltration

from Laos into South Vietnam" (Brush, 1997, p. 1). "The strategic rationale was secondary to the primary reason for holding onto Khe Sanh: Washington was unwilling to give its enemy a psychological victory by giving ground" (Brush, p. 1). Rather than face the facts on the ground, Westmoreland and the administration dug in. Johnson knew Dien Bien Phu had destroyed French resolve to continue their war in Vietnam. He did not intend to permit the same thing to happen to America.

The Americans had the advantage of incredible airpower, an advantage the French did not have because the Americans withheld it from them at Dien Bien Phu. Even with this advantage, the North Vietnamese put a stranglehold on the American garrison. Convoys attempting to supply the Marines were ambushed. Ground re-supply became impossible and aerial delivery was the only option. This was all played out on TV. "Americans from all walks of life saw the desperation of American forces as supplies were literally dropped onto the air-strip at Khe Sanh, with the occasional plane exploding from enemy fire" (Siege of Khe Sanh, n.d., p. 1). It was becoming obvious that the United States was indeed facing its Dien Bien Phu. So many aircraft were being lost; it was no longer possible to land supplies by airplane. New techniques had to be developed to bring in desperately needed water and ammunition to the Marine defenders.

> "Air support was everything, the cornerstone of our hopes at Khe Sanh, and we knew that once the monsoons lifted, it would be nothing to drop tens of thousands of tons of high explosives and napalm all around the base, to supply it without strain, to cover and reinforce the Marines" (Herr, 2007).

Although airpower helped the Marines hold on, it had limited effectiveness. Between Jan. 22 and March 25, allied airman dropped 80,000 tons of ordnance around Khe Sanh.

> "Even though 80,000 tons is more than the … tonnage dropped on Japan throughout [World War II], it had not stopped enemy movement around Khe Sanh. On March 25, a Marine patrol was halted by heavy enemy machine-gun and mortar fire after traveling only 100 to 200 yards beyond the camp's barbed wire perimeter. During the previous week, the enemy had managed to fire 1500 rocket, artillery and mortar rounds at the Khe Sanh base" (Brush, 1997, p. 1).

The Siege of Khe Sanh was officially considered over by the Americans after 76 days of fighting. This was, in fact, nothing more than a unilateral declaration by the United States. Facts on the ground were quite different. The North Vietnamese were in control of the area. Only the overwhelming airpower that was brought to bear by the United States saved the outpost. Although the official reports say otherwise, the United States was forced to withdraw from Khe Sanh. The first American patrols after the "end of the siege" met with disaster.

It has been said that the Tet Offensive turned American public opinion against the war in Vietnam. That is probably only true because the siege at Khe Sanh preceded it. Just as the French were shocked by the idea that these

backward Asian peasants could stand against their vastly superior forces, so were the Americans shocked that those same Asian peasants stood up against them. The fact that the North Vietnamese could withstand the punishment unleashed upon them from American aircraft was difficult to believe.

U.S. forces were careful to remove everything from the battlefield. The administration wanted nothing left such as the hulks of aircraft or vehicles that the communists could use as propaganda. Of course, the North Vietnamese version of events is that they did indeed force an American withdrawal and did win a major victory at Khe Sanh. The events at Langvei, about 5 kilometers from Khe Sanh, add some credence to their argument.

> "As a percentage of North Vietnam's prewar population, the number of NVA killed in the war against the Americans was equal to the percentages of those killed in several of the European nations laid waste during [World War I]. Westmoreland was unable to grasp why his adversaries found the rate tolerable. The answer is, of course, because the stakes were equivalent for the Europeans and the Vietnamese Communists" (Brush, 1997, p. 3).

This fact was simply beyond understanding for most Americans. The U.S. military had completely underestimated its enemy.

> "As military historian Ronald Spector has pointed out, during the first half of 1968 (the period of heavy fighting at Khe Sanh) the Marine casualty rate in Vietnam exceeded the American casualty rate in either the European or Pacific theater of [World War II] as well as during the Korean War. With nothing to be gained at Khe Sanh beyond killing communists, ordering their withdrawal and the closing of the base was a sensible political and military decision. Although many claim that the United States never lost a battle in Vietnam, it is impossible to reasonably put the fighting at Khe Sanh in the American 'win' column" (Brush, 1997, p. 4).

Few Americans will agree that there is any similarity between the famous French defeat at Dien Bien Phu and the American "defense" of Khe Sanh. It is simply too ingrained in the American psyche that the French are incompetent cowards and Americans are brave professionals. Even if these stereotypes were true, it fails to take into account the bravery and determination of the Vietnamese.

The idea that it may have been the competence and daring of the Vietnamese that had defeated the French, and that drove out the Americans, is more than most Westerners are willing to admit. The superiority of western arms is simply accepted as fact and is not a subject of serious debate. However, if this is true, both the French and Americans committed serious errors in choosing the ground upon which they would fight their Vietnamese enemy. Only arrogance of the worst kind could explain it.

Prior to Khe Sanh, the Vietnamese had only been in one decisive engagement with the Americans. This battle took place in the Ia Drang valley. The Vietnamese had proved no match for American maneuverability and firepower even with superior numbers. They had learned a valuable lesson and took it to heart.

Between the battle in the Ia Drang and that of Khe Sanh, the Vietnamese avoided decisive combat. They chose instead to lure the Americans into a fight on terrain that would give them none of the advantages of the earlier battle. At Khe Sahn, the Vietnamese found just what they had been looking for. We may never know why they chose not to decisively defeat the Americans at Khe Sanh. We will never know what would have been the outcome had they decided to do so.

The similarities between the battles of Khe Sanh and Dien Bien Phu are many, and the differences are few. While there can be little doubt that the majority of Americans will disagree, the most important difference is that airpower alone spared the United States the humiliation endured by the French. The most important similarity was the complete lack of understanding of the Vietnamese. This misunderstanding sealed the fate of those defending the encircled garrison.

The defense of Khe Sanh by the American Marines was tenacious. Their stand was gallant and should have inspired pride in their countrymen. That, however, was not the case. The images of the siege of Khe Sanh sapped the American resolve to carry on the war. Support for the war effort dwindled steadily. It would only be a matter of time before the war was brought to an unceremonious end. President Johnson had gotten his "damn Din Bin Phoo", Khe Sanh and the Tet Offensive doomed his political career.

Had the American chain-of-command had a solid grasp of history; had they been less arrogant; had they not underestimated the enemy or their allies;, the battle of Khe Sanh might never have happened. To this day the facts surrounding the battle are not well known or denied by most Americans. Few, if any, Soldiers can accurately describe the history of Vietnam, the French involvement in that region, or the American efforts there. This is merely a symptom of a larger problem, the lack of historical knowledge in general and, more specifically, an unwillingness to apply such knowledge.

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# Developing Professional Soldiers

## *The benefits of understanding our military's history*

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**15 March 2007**

**Abstract**

*The military is a profession of arms. Soldiers and leaders must use every resource available to enhance their profession. One invaluable resource is the study of experiences and situations of past military leaders along with their lessons learned in combat. While leaders must focus on the technical aspects of war fighting, understanding military history enables them to learn from the success and failure of past Soldiers who faced similar situations. This can help today's Soldiers prepare for present and future conflicts.*

### Understanding Our Military's History

The military is a profession of arms. As professional Soldiers and leaders we must use every resource available to enhance our profession. One invaluable resource is the study of experiences and situations of past military leaders along with their lessons learned in combat. Successful military leaders of the past recognized the need to study military history and developed their professional tactical abilities. This study of military history provides insight into the critical-thinking required by professional Soldiers.

The modern military demands critical thinkers at all levels of leader throughout the ranks of officers, noncommissioned officers and lower enlisted Soldiers. These critical-thinkers' abilities and tactical skills are seen throughout military history. The advancement of technology and modern war fighting equipment shifted the focus of many military professionals to the technical facet of war, but successful Soldiers have still learned from history.

Gen. George S. Patton wrote, "To be a successful Soldier, you must know history" (A Guide to the Study and Use of Military History, 1978, p. xi). Many famous military leaders throughout history value the importance of history and credit their success to its study. Today's Soldiers must do the same.

Today's military is a much smaller and more technology-based force. The rapid advancement of technology and weaponry demands a more technologically educated Soldier. Because of this change, the study of military history on an operational level has declined since the end of World War II. According to John E. Jessup and Robert W. Coakley, "This happened partly because of the information explosion broadened so greatly by the areas in which an officer had to be knowledgeable and partly because of a belief that the pace of change in technology had rendered the study of past experience irrelevant" (A

Guide to the Study and Use of Military History, 1978, p. xi). The time from the end of the Cold War through the current Global War on Terrorism has created an extremely rigorous operational tempo, which places severe demands on the time Soldiers have for training and preparation for rotations into combat operational theaters. The combined focus on technology and lack of time due to high operational tempo make it difficult for Soldiers to study military history. The study of military history is a force enabler that develops Soldiers into critical thinkers and not merely technological workers. Professional military institutions at all levels recognize the critical value in revitalizing the study of military history for our professional Soldiers.

The U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy recognizes the importance of the study of military history. Its military history program develops senior noncommissioned officers into critical-thinkers by comparing historical battles and campaigns to current combat situations. According to the USASMA H100 Military History Course Syllabus, "The primary objective of this course is to illustrate how an understanding of the historical process-the ability to analyze change over time can improve the ability of Soldiers to think critically, to be agile and adaptive leaders, and to understand that, while history does not hold all the answers, it can help Soldiers conduct a better mission analysis through an understanding that many of the problems we now confront are not new" (USASMA, H100 Course Syllabus, 2006, p. 1). The course provides examples of past military conflicts from the past that have identical aspects of current situations and conflicts.

The military history lessons from History Lesson 102 enable senior NCOs to analyze the changing ways an Army reacts to fighting an insurgency in relationship to conventional warfare. For example, the European way of war practiced by the British during the 17th and 18th centuries was linear in nature. This type of war was usually fought in large open areas during good weather conditions.

> "Armies were composed predominantly of infantry, with cavalry and artillery as supporting elements. Because battles were usually fought in open country, cavalry could be employed to full advantage. As for artillery, it was used in both attack and defense, either in campaigns of maneuver in siege warfare. The clash of the infantry usually decided the issue" (American Military History, Volume 1, 2005, p. 23-24).

This type of warfare was ineffective against the insurgency during the American Revolution. The techniques for fighting in America were much different than in Europe. The colonists had experience, a strong will, the element of surprise and time on their side. The British response to the colonial resistance was to send in a large army with scores of Soldiers to overpower the colonists and put an end to the revolution by an overwhelming superior force.

Similar elements of the European way of war practiced by the British during this time along with the insurgency during the American Revolution, and the British response to colonial resistance are seen in our current combat operations in Iraq today. The U.S. military entered Iraq as a superior conventional military

power. The United States rapidly defeated Iraq's conventional military and occupied the country in conventional warfare. , mirroring British practices. Then the insurgency in Iraq began attacking our conventional forces with asymmetrical warfare, which continues to be successful against our military. This is similar to the colonist's insurgency. The Iraq insurgency also has support from neighboring states similar to France's support of the colonists. The U.S. response to the Iraq insurgency has been to send in a larger surge of forces to suppress the insurgency. The circumstances and relationship between the American Revolution with the British, and the U.S. operations in Iraq today are easily revealed. Have we learned from history?

USASMA's History Lesson H104 examines U.S. history during its Civil War period. One of the first lessons to gain from that period is the evolving goals of the war. The initial goal was to preserve the Union. The Northern Union did not want the Southern Confederacy to secede from the United States. As the war progressed the Southern Confederacy began to gain support from European allies, primarily England. The goals rapidly changed from a war simply to preserve the union, to a war to preserve the union and create freedom for all Americans. This meant the end of slavery, which the southern states did not want. England could not support slavery, having already abolished it in England. This change in goals curtailed possible support for the south. As we continue to study this time period we can see the challenges confronting Union troops during the reconstruction period after the Civil War. The Union Soldiers stationed in the south did not want to be there after the war, because the southern population resented their presence and considered them an occupying force. The northern culture was much different than the southern culture. During the reconstruction period U.S. Soldiers occupying the Former Confederate states attempted to change the culture and attitude about slavery. The southern population began an insurgency against the forced change. The initial support for reconstruction in the south was high, but as time passed the support began to fade which led to the abandonment of reconstruction goals. The growing unrest and violence contributed to the loss of support for the reconstruction.

Today's events in Iraq are very similar to the situation and circumstances during this period of conflict. The initial goals of the war in Iraq were to put an end to possible weapons of mass destruction and support for terrorism by a rogue dictatorship. As the war progressed the goals changed to regime change, freeing the Iraqi people, and spreading democracy. The goals evolved to enhance democracy and stabilize the Middle East region. Another similarity between Iraq and the Civil War is that initially the Iraqi people celebrated their freedom, but as our forces remained in Iraq they were seen as an occupying force by the Iraqi people. This began to cause resentment and mistrust. The differences between Western and Muslim cultures are also significant. The Iraqi people along with many Middle Eastern countries believe the United States wants to change the Muslim culture and that the West does not care about their beliefs. This parallels the beliefs of Union Soldiers who were stationed in the Confederate states. The insurgency and civil unrest between tribal groups in Iraq, which are similar

to the growing unrest following the Civil War, are contributing to the loss of support for the reconstruction and improved security in Iraq. The growing tensions are beginning to divide the U.S. Congress and many countries around the world. Again, have we learned from history?

The insurgency and counterinsurgency operations are not new lessons for the U.S. military. The lessons learned from USASMA's History Lesson 105 demonstrate counterinsurgency operations conducted by the United States in the early part of the 20th century. The U.S. counterinsurgency operations in Cuba and the Philippines following the Spanish-American War are another example. The goals in each case were to free a nation from an oppressing country. In this case the country was Spain. After successfully defeated the Spanish, the United States remained in both Cuba and the Philippines. The local population in both countries created an insurgency against the United States. Through the study of military history it is easy to come to the conclusion that time favors the insurgents. The United States successfully defeated many insurgents but the insurgency never completely ended without the deaths of thousands of people. The United States is also familiar with full spectrum operations, having conducted them in Vera Cruz in 1914. Maj. Gen. Frederick Funston employed several innovative solutions during those operations. He created an Office of Civil Affairs, implemented vaccinations, and improved the sanitation of Vera Cruz. The operations also had some issues. Those Mexican officials did not want to work for the U.S. military, and there were many cultural differences between the U.S. military and the local population.

The current operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are very similar to the insurgency and counterinsurgency operations the United States faced in Cuba and the Philippines. The initial goals were to free the people from an oppressive regime and establish a stable democratic government. The longer the United States remains in these countries the more they are seen as an occupying force. The insurgent knows they do not have to defeat the United States, but must only outlast the will of the American people to continue to wage the counterinsurgency. The full spectrum operations conducted in today's conflicts are similar to those conducted in Vera Cruz. Civil Affairs teams continue to rebuild the Iraqi and Afghanistan infrastructure by creating jobs for the local population, and the cultural differences continue to create tension and mistrust between the local population and the U.S. military personnel.

USASMA uses lessons like these to develop senior NCOs who understand the parallels between today and history. Reading military history alone is not enough. The faculty advisors also mentor the students. This interaction transforms Soldiers into critical-thinkers through the process of studying historical battles and campaigns, and then applying those studies to today's conflicts. Marcus Aurelius stated, "Nothing has such power to broaden the mind as the ability to investigate systematically and truly all that comes under thy observation in life" (Lombardi, 2007).

This method of studying history enables us to learn from the experiences of other military professionals who've faced similar experiences without paying

their high costs.

> "So it is said that if you know your enemies and know yourself, you will win hundred times in hundred battles. If you only know yourself, but not your opponent, you win one and lose the next. If you do not know yourself or your enemy, you will always lose" (The Art of War, Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia, 2007).

As a nation at war, our leaders must focus on both the technical aspect of war fighting, and the experiences revealed in our military's history. History provides many examples and similarities of today's modern conflicts and by studying it today's Soldiers can avoid costly past mistakes. While history may not offer any clear cut answers to current situations, studying it does offer examples of successful and unsuccessful solutions to historical challenges. Having a better understanding of military history is a valuable tool that Soldiers can use to prepare for today and tomorrow's conflicts.

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# Awareness Impacts Military Operations
## *Learning from the cultural aspects of the Indian Wars*

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**Abstract**

*The U.S. Army is wrought with many successes and failures based on its attempts to understand the culture of others. When compared and contrasted with the Indian Wars, the current operations in Iraq illustrate the pattern of cultural misunderstanding throughout our military's history. Positive and negative factors of the Indian Wars directly correlate with factors in Operation Iraqi Freedom.*

### Cultural Lessons from the Indian Wars

Attempts by U.S. Army planners and leaders to integrate a cultural mindset during military operations have always been difficult, especially during initial combat operations. This is because military planners and leaders rarely consider the culture of the people affected by those military operations. For example, during the Indian Wars, Indian culture was not a prominent factor for leaders because of the U.S. government's mindset. When planners and leaders have considered culture during modern military operations, they were often baffled by the results. The bottom line is that studying history can help our military leaders correlate the importance of culture with experiences. This will help our military focus on cultural aspects and instill a cultural understanding that is vital to winning the peace. But, why was it so difficult for our forefathers to understand the Indians living on the western frontier?

Currently there are approximately 328 recognized Indian tribes in the continental United States; each with its own political systems and many with their own languages (Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Indian Tribes, 2007). Native Americans were not one people with one universal culture.

Unfortunately, the U.S. government did not acknowledge these facts about the Native Americans. Instead, government officials made the mistake of grouping all the tribes into one category. Consequently, government and military leaders ran into many difficulties.

In present operations in Iraq, the diverse Iraqi culture compares in many ways the Native American tribes of the Indian Wars. The culture in Iraq is very different than the western culture of the United States. It can be broken into three main sects that known as Kurdish, Shiite, and Sunni. Even though members of these sects are all Iraqis, each sect has a very different culture, bloodline and religious beliefs. Adding to the complexity, there are many dialects in Iraq, just as there were with the Indians. There are many other parallel cultural aspects

between the Iraqis and the Native Americans, but both cultures share one clear similarity – the lack of cultural awareness is linked by U.S. government.

Probably most disturbing during the Indian Wars was that President Andrew Jackson and the U.S. Congress passed the Indian Removal Act of 1830 (Native Americans in the United States, 2007). At first, the treaty appeared to be yet another of the many treaties established between the Indians and the U.S. government, but the act forced many Indians living east of the Mississippi River from their homes, pushing them west in a land exchange. The program was supposed to encourage voluntary moves which, in many cases, turned out to be mandatory.

In one particular removal treaty, the Treaty of New Echota, the government negotiated the deal with unofficial leaders of the Cherokee Tribe. When the Cherokee Nation's official leaders refused to recognize the treaty, a civil war erupted among Cherokees, resulting in brutal enforcement by the U.S. military under President Martin Van Buren's direction (Treaty of New Echota, 2007). Many Cherokees and Soldiers were killed.

Another disturbing policy by the U.S. government was created from the words of Jackson. He told Americans, "Kill as many bison as possible in order to cut the Plains Indian's main source of food" (Native Americans in the United States, 2007). This revealed that the U.S. government displayed no willingness to respect the Native American culture even when it was understood.

While our government struggled with the cultural problem, our military gained vast amounts of knowledge for future operations because of their daily contact with the Indians. An example of this interaction was in handling the many logistical problems encountered during long marches prior to confrontation with the Indians. Birtle (1998, p.8) stated that Anglo-American commanders adopted several expedients to lighten the load on ground forces. They improved training to better correspond with operations, developed march and camp procedures to minimize the danger of ambushes, organized a special corps of light infantry, and augmented their forces with irregulars – frontiersman, rangers and Indians – used as guides and auxiliaries (p.8). They improved on the traditional European-style of warfare by adopting these changes.

Although these procedures were used during earlier conflicts with the Indians, they were never fully integrated into the Army until 1812 (Birtle, 1998, p.11). They established an unofficial manual titled "A Treatise on the Mode and Manner of Indian War," which was drafted by James Smith. The manual put it all together and became the basiset to the Anglo-American approach in Indian warfare during the 18th and 19th centuries. Integrating Indian tactics and warfare proved an Army success resulting from cultural awareness. Our military has a tough job but is slowly gaining this cultural understanding in Iraq, but the American people do not fully understand the situation; maybe if it were compared to the Indian Wars it would become clearer.

Another success in cultural understanding emerged in the Indian Wars when Army leaders presided over Indian affairs with the officials from the Bureau of

Indian Affairs. The Army provided the power of enforcement and experienced officers to negotiate treaties. But, when problems arose during negotiations, the Army was relieved of its duties. Ultimately, the Army had to return to fix even worse problems created by the non-military negotiators. Officers such as Gen. Winfield Scott and Gen. John "Black Jack" Pershing learned firsthand about the Indian culture and how to negotiate Indian affairs, by serving as commanders of Indian Scouts and Soldiers early in their careers.

Scott and Pershing's experiences provided vital cultural insight and laid the groundwork for a growing belief that the U.S. government's Indian policy was a failure (Birtle, 1998, p. 77). Most of the failures were political in nature, coupled with poor interagency coordination, general corruption, and most notably, a lack of Indian cultural awareness. The leaders involved with the Indian Wars learned many lessons that would become useful to them in later nation building operations in Cuba and the Philippines.

When looking at today's situation in Iraq, the emerging insurgency in Iraq in 2003 revealed outdated U.S. counterinsurgency tactics, but military leaders on the battlefield quickly updated those tactics based on past operations and the ever-evolving situations now. They recently appointed a seasoned commander, Gen. David H. Petraeus, to assume responsibilities in Iraq. His appointed was not coincidental. Our leaders looked at historical aspects of military involvement in past conflicts and saw something that worked, and Petraeus possibly reflected that something.

## Conclusion

As our military conducts current operations around the world, we must be aware of cultural differences thriving in the nations where we operate. Not necessary for us to be experts or understand every aspect of a nation's culture, but more because we must know key aspects that will assist us in gaining the confidence of the people. Korea and Germany, even Turkey and Kuwait, are great models of how the U.S. military has applied what it learned in the Indian Wars to adapt to foreign cultures. History provides us clear guidance as to the importance of cultural awareness. This awareness that serves as a combat multiplier on today's battlefields.

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# The Empowerment of the American Noncommissioned Officer

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**Abstract**

*Studying military history is an important part of the professional development of today's modern Soldier. In the past, only the officer corps engaged in this process of intellectualization. Soldiers and noncommissioned officers in the modern Army now recognize the importance of studying military history, and applying the lessons learned in the past to current and future warfare. Part of this process is understanding the founding roots of the NCO Corps, how it has developed over the years, and where it will go in the future. Specifically, this paper addresses a key facet of the NCO; empowerment and the authority that is given to NCOs to lead Soldiers.*

## Empowerment of the American Noncommissioned Officer

The American noncommissioned officer is more empowered today than at any other point in military history. The three most important factors that have led to the empowerment of the NCO are; changes in warfare, creation of the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES), and appointment of senior NCOs to key leadership positions. But, some NCOs would argue that even though NCOs have attained a certain amount of power, it has leveled off and has not increased to the degree that officers are willing to allow NCOs more authority and control.

## Empowerment as a Result of Changes in Warfare

First and most importantly, NCOs never really had a choice but to be empowered due to the nature of evolving warfare and modernization of the Army since its creation in June 1775. During the Civil War, modernization of weapons forced a change in tactics and NCO responsibilities in combat. The following passage from the book The *Story of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps* (2005, p. 11) emphasizes this point:

> "The gradual elimination of linear tactics after the Civil War redefined the NCO's combat leadership role. Throughout the world, a technological revolution continued to sweep over all armies, supplying both the infantry and the artillery with weapons of ever growing lethality. These weapons broke up the use of close-packed masses of troops, forcing them into a more open order of battle preceded by lines of skirmishes. This change in tactics emphasized and expanded the role of small-unit leaders, the noncommissioned officers, in maintaining order on a more complex

battlefield."

This evolution continues today as the Army transforms by utilizing the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model to meet future threats in support of our national interests. A critical component of the ARFORGEN model is the production of mission-capable combat units that are deployable within a specific time window. This would be impossible without an NCO power base. In this dynamic environment NCOs have the skill sets required to rebuild or reset units during the reset period. In order to accomplish the task of resetting the unit in preparation for combat operations, an NCO must be empowered to make decisions at the lowest level in order to efficiently execute pre-deployment training and preparation and meet the deployment window time line.

In connection with ARFORGEN, the Army will begin fielding Future Combat Systems, a technology based initiative that has developed at a rapid pace to meet our future warfare needs. The focal point of FCS will always be human, and at the helm of FCS are the NCOs. With the advent of FCS and operations being conducted in complex battle spaces, the role of NCOs and the authority with which they execute operations will evolve.

It is also interesting to note the similarities of the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) expeditionary force compared to Army Special Forces (SF) units and the impact this has on conventional Soldiers, specifically NCOs. Historically, since its inception in 1952, SF Soldiers and units are trained to adapt to ambiguous situations across the operational continuum engaging threats mostly on non-linear fronts while working with indigenous forces. SF trains NCOs to operate independently, giving them authority to make on-the-spot decisions. Now we see a paradigm shift in Army doctrine toward adopting the same SF doctrine with the employment of the BCT expeditionary force. NCOs of the BCT will be required to take on new skill sets that enhance self-sufficiency throughout their operational environment, often working with indigenous or coalition forces. Officers may argue that it is their responsibility to conduct analysis and critical thinking then pass down orders to subordinates who carry out those orders. This will not work on the modern battlefield where units of action are spread out globally and where situations require immediate responses in terms of determining one course of action or another. NCOs must be empowered to make decisions at the lowest level, enabling decentralized operations, a key to success in counterinsurgency operations. Critical thinking enables NCOs to adapt to and shape their operating environment with the organic assets of the BCT. In other words, NCOs must make do with what they have available in the BCT organization in order to support operations. Limited resources cause NCOs to be more creative, empowering their ability to critically think through courses of action, realizing that all resources are finite.

**Empowerment through NCOES**

One of the greatest sources of NCO empowerment was the establishment of the Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) in 1971. Prior to 1971 there were various NCO development courses conducted throughout the

Army but they lacked the standardization required by the institutional Army resulting in a fragmented system. NCOs have continuously been empowered by the NCOES, and as the Army transforms to meet the demands of future warfare, NCOs will attain higher levels of education leading to more effective leadership. The Army always strives to ensure its institutions remain current and relevant as articulated by Wallace (2006, p. 106) in the following statement:

> Success is accomplished through aggressive, yet values-based, recruiting of citizens who answer the call to duty; sustaining a dramatically changed initial military training program; and refining officer and senior noncommissioned officer leader development programs that mold flexible and adaptive leaders of character and competence.

Additionally, the combat arms Advance Noncommissioned Office Courses (ANCOC) are transforming to meet the needs of combat arms military occupational specialties. The restructuring of certain combat arms MOS ANCOCs will no doubt benefit as illustrated by Smith (2006, p. 5) in the following excerpt:

> Maneuver ANCOC will replace the traditional ANCOC for both career management fields 11 and 19. This includes the 11B, 11C, 19D, and 19K MOS series. Initially conducted at Fort Knox, Ky., and Fort Benning, Ga., this course combines infantry and armor senior NCOs in a small-group instruction environment. They will receive instruction and lessons learned by sharing experiences as they pertain to the responsibilities of a platoon sergeant. This instruction and small-group discussion incorporates doctrinal knowledge, as well as the most current and relevant tactics, techniques and procedures.

The ANCOC restructuring is a key indicator that the NCOES is constantly evolving to meet the needs of the Army and NCO Corps and dispels any perceptions that empowerment of the NCO is being held back.

**Empowerment by Appointing Senior NCOs to Key Leadership Positions**

History has shown the importance of the creation of leadership positions for senior NCOs. As modernization of the force has occurred, we have seen the creation of the rank of master sergeant, first sergeant, sergeant major, command sergeant major and sergeant major of the Army. In 1966, the Army selected Sgt. Maj. William O. Wooldridge as the first sergeant major of the Army. His job was to be advisor and consultant to the Army chief of staff on enlisted matters. In 1967, the Army established the position of command sergeant major to serve as commanders' enlisted advisors at the battalion level and higher. A pivotal point in the evolutionary process of the NCO Corps came during the Vietnam era when the Army realized its importance. *The Story of the Noncommissioned Officer Corps* (2005, p. 28) states:

> After two hundred years of NCO evolution and development as trainers, technical specialists and small-unit leaders, the Army was at last fully prepared to recognize, encourage and reward NCO professionalism. No less was needed if the Army was to continue to serve the nation that

depended upon it.

As the NCO rank structure evolved the NCO Corps took on a great deal more responsibility. Daily routine activities of garrison life and the responsibility of individual training were delegated to NCOs while the officers shifted their focus to collective training.

At the battalion level and higher, command sergeants major have been the most influential leaders within the NCO Corps. The NCO at this level has a vested interest in taking care of Soldiers. Having senior NCOs in key positions facilitates a commander's decision making process by giving him years of experience and the NCO perspective for assistance. As senior advisors, command sergeants major address issues of NCO concern like, pay, education and quality of life. One example of a major influence was articulated during a recent open forum of several former SMAs conducted at United States Army Sergeants Major Academy (USASMA) in which a student asked former Sgt. Maj. of the Army Jack Tilley, "In your opinion what was your major contribution to the force?" Tilley responded, "I think my greatest contribution was the advancement of pay for the enlisted force" (2007).

Even the Department of Defense has come to realize the importance of senior enlisted advisors to commanders and staffs with the appointment of the first senior enlisted advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Sgt. Maj. William J. Gainey, who assumed his position on Oct. 1, 2005.

## Conclusion

It would be a disservice to the NCO Corps to presume that NCO empowerment has leveled off at the discretion of officers. It can be argued that NCOs are empowered more now than at any other point in history due to the changes in warfare, the creation of the NCOES, and the appointment of senior NCOs to key leadership positions. As the Army transforms into a force for the future, NCOs will evolve with it in order to maintain a grasp of technological advances and current operational concepts. This will empower NCOs to lead Soldiers on the modern battlefield, whatever shape it may take. The Army is fully committed to maintaining a professional NCO Corps as demonstrated by the emphasis it places on NCO training through the NCOES and by appointing senior NCOs to key positions of influence. The Army relies heavily on the advice of NCOs when making key institutional, tactical, operational and strategic decisions, as Kaplan (2005, p. B.11) observes:

> Never before in military history have NCOs, who deal at the lowest tactical level, where operational success or failure is determined, been so critical. This is because of the changing nature of conflict. As the age of mass-infantry warfare closes, and the battlefield disperses and empties out over vast deserts, jungles and poor, sprawling cities, armies increasingly operate unconventionally in small, autonomous units, at the level of the platoon and below, where sergeants reign supreme.

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# Critical Cultural Understanding

## *Common oversights in the Cuban, Philippine and Iraq conflicts*

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**28 February 2007**

**Abstract**

*Our political leaders' position in the United States of America has always been that only the strongest and most advanced technological Army will prevail on the battlefield. They believe that when this is combined with a systematical, analogical and a strategic military mind, our victory will be undisputed. The Cuban, Philippines and Iraq military campaigns demonstrate that our political leaders' assumptions are not conducive to reality and the facts. The understanding of other countries' political and cultural priorities is vital for the success of our military operations. We must tailor our military strategy activities overseas so as not to violate native beliefs. The most successful Army will be the one that possesses the ability to work around cultural barriers.*

### The Importance of Cultural Understanding

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the lack of knowledge and understanding of other cultures hindered our leaders' abilities to develop effective counterinsurgency strategies. This lack of cultural understanding continues to obstruct the rebuilding and pacification campaigns in Iraq. This obstacle could be overcome by studying how culture is affected by our participation in unconventional wars. Past wars have proven to our senior leaders the importance and necessity of cultural understanding as an integral part of the development of our military strategy. This has become essential to mission success, and is an effective weapon against irregular forces. The politicians and top military leaders of this country are still looking for an answer to how the strongest Army on earth can not bring an end to the war in Iraq? Our leaders need to take a look into history to find some answers on how to develop an effective counterinsurgency strategy.

### Department of Defense Mission

For many decades, the United States has delegated overseas nation building, pacification, and establishment of a democratic government as a military function, but the president has abstained from providing the Army direction on how to achieve these goals. He leaves the preparation and implementation of occupation policies up to the Department of Defense. These policies have caused several problems for the U. S. Army. The Army has to accomplish a mission that it was not trained for, to establish prosperous democratic societies overseas, and in the absence of guidance, every officer in charge has to develop their own

method to accomplish the goal.

The most successful officers have been those who are open minded enough to learn the local language and customs. They aspired to achieve their end by working through rather than against the indigenous culture (Birtle, p. 163). This has achieved some positive results during the early stages of the wars in those areas that had never committed to rebellion.

**Initial Stage of Counterinsurgency Operations**

The initial stage of military operations represents a significant threat to resistance leaders, because it undermines the commitment of the population to the insurgent cause. Through the early pacification phase, history has shows the resistance leaders felt that the American's policy of attraction would gain support of the populations (Birtle, 2004, p.123). To gain an advantage during the initial phase we must move quickly to build a strong bond with an uncommitted population. This must be obtained before the insurgents begin their military actions against the local natives.

Prior to the deployment of our units, it is vital that Soldiers develop a good cultural understanding of the region where they are going to be operating. This could be achieved by studying customs, religions, traditions, social norms, country history, sectarian issues and learning native languages. This increases Soldiers' abilities to achieve their mission by educating them on what types of challenges they can expect in a region.

**Overseas Nation Building Failure in Cuba**

The Army's goal during the nation building in Cuba from 1898 to 1902 were to pass the American culture to the Cubans in a short period of time. The Army started to try to impose the America's morals, ethics and values, but all the Army really did was impose American-style institutions that gained very little support from Cuban society (Birtle, 2004, p.104-105). When the Army withdrew, Cubans abandoned all American reforms.

There were many reasons this nation building program in Cuba failed. The Army leaders moved too quickly to effectively Americanize the Cuban culture, and American Soldiers used their positions of authority to impose their moral and ethical values upon resentful people. The Army leaders' higher to lower management style also contributed to the failure of the nation building. They gave the Cuban population very little to say over important policy decisions. This undermined efforts to establish independent local government and grass roots of a democratic institution. Cultural barriers on both sides contributed to the demise of many of the Army's best intentions (Birtle, 2004, p106-108).

**Cultural Barriers Delay our Daily Operations in Philippines**

In 1899, during the Philippine War, the population was divided among tribal, linguistic and religious groups that disliked each other. The American Soldiers were not aware of the cultural differences between the groups and had not trained to overcome the communication barriers. Our leaders had difficulty

dealing with the local authorities. They could not accomplish anything without the help of an interpreter, which hindered the pacification process. To make things worse, there was no way of distinguishing allies from enemies. The only people who could accomplish this were the local natives. But, they were reluctant to assist the American Soldiers because the natives were afraid of being assassinated (Birtle, 2004). A large segment of the population was not truly committed to independence or new ideologies.

**The Iraq War Resemblance**

The current situation in Iraq is remarkably similar to the challenges faced during the Philippine War. The Army is now given the similar responsibilities of small-war combat operations, nation building and security tasks. The politicians and Army leaders in past administrations failed to understand the irregular operations necessary to develop effective military strategies; pacification, reconciliation, retaliation, nation building and cultural awareness. We have learned from past wars that the success of irregular warfare operations depends on the Soldiers' interaction with the local population. Currently, our forces in Iraq are engaging in a pacification operation where cultural awareness is vital for the success of our mission. We are trying to establish peace, order and government authority in areas that are extremely hostile, and to achieve this goal the United States and the Iraqi Army are conducting simultaneous military and civilian operations as a joint force. The language and cultural gaps have become an obstacle to these goals, and are preventing our leaders from developing an effective military strategy. These challenges have slowed our progress.

This is an example of how cultural barriers have a negative impact in daily operations in Iraq. The Soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison could not effectively accomplish their mission of obtaining critical information and intelligence from enemy prisoners due to the lack of interpreters. When faced with a line-up of prisoners, it often took more than three months before a prisoner was interrogated.

Many units have experienced the same problem throughout the country during their initial phase of combat operations, because there are not enough interpreters to accompany all units. Good intelligence in Iraq is essential for the stability of any combat operations, and without information, our Soldiers' ability to accomplish their mission is significantly reduced.

One of the most difficult cultural barriers for our Soldiers to overcome, and perhaps the most important one, is being familiar with the native language. To learn and be proficient in another language can take years of study and immersion into that country's culture. Linguistic and cultural barriers seriously complicate American's relationships with Iraqis.

**Political Leaders Turn to the U.S. Military to fix the Cultural and Political Problems in Iraq**

Once again, the political leadership of our country has turned to the U.S. military to fix internal cultural and political problems in Iraq. The last four years

in Iraq have demonstrated confusions of the Iraqi political and cultural priorities.

Lt. Col. Craig T. Trebilcock stated, "it is very important than we understand the Iraqi political and cultural priorities" (Trebilcock, 2007). He explained that the concept of civil government centralized at the provincial and national level is new to the Iraqis, because their social structure remains tribal. They do not believe in sharing power like the Western concept of Democracy. The primary concern of Iraqi officials is not democracy or the political evolution of a successful Iraqi nation. It is the use of their position in government to gain personal wealth, and benefits for their family and tribe. Saddam Hussein's government was packed with his family and tribal members, because they were thought to be loyal, and it was expected of him to bring benefits to his tribe. Other Iraqi officials are similar in this regard. It is a cultural norm for the political leaders to work in the best interests of themselves and their tribes.

The insurgents are also fighting for something they believe in -- expelling foreign troops and sectarian enemies from tribal areas and cities that they hold dear. For thousands of years the Iraqis have learned that the group that controls the resources of the province or nation survives. Sharing resources or power with other tribes is an unfamiliar and foreign concept. During their centuries of desert survival, they've learned that the strong flourish.

But, why don't the Iraqis just try to get along for mutual benefit? That's a Westernized theory being applied to a culture that employing violent conflict to gain advantage is the norm. If the current Sunni insurgency is to be stopped, we must demonstrate to the Iraqi insurgents that the personal benefits of peace with Shiites clearly outweigh the possible gain by continuing to fight for dominance. Increasing culturally-blind military operations will inflame this struggle for political dominance, not diminish it.

Iraqis also do not share Western concepts on the use and value of time. They believe that if a matter is truly important, Allah will control the outcome. The personal efforts of individuals are merely irrelevant to Allah's will. This is a source of frustration for U.S. service members who have served in Iraq and have seen an apparent lack of resolve and reliability from their counterpart. The concept of Inshallah – God willing, or only if God wills it, will it happen – overshadows all aspects of Iraqi life, including reconstruction and political evolution. Because of this, the political resolution if any in Iraq will be achieved according to the Iraqi society, not based on a U.S. timetable. The concept of democracy has little value in Iraqi culture, because the people's willingness to fight and die for its success is virtually nonexistent.

Self-preservation is one of the values that they are willing to fight for, democracy is not. Promoting the integrity and power of their respective tribes within a new Iraq is more realistic, considering the cultural values of the Iraqis.

## Conclusion

We must tailor our nation building activities so they do not violate native beliefs, by respecting existing traditions and customs. By understanding other countries' political and cultural priorities, we can develop an effective

counterinsurgency strategy. We have learned from past wars that the success of irregular warfare operations depends on the Soldiers' interaction with the local population. In today's war on terrorism, Soldiers are often forced to engage their minds before their weapons, by using diplomacy, respect and familiarity with local customs and languages in the theater of operations. Soldiers who master these skills possess the ability to work around cultural barriers and achieve our mission overseas.

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