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CONFLICT TERMINATION: EVERY CONFLICT MUST END

BY

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A Paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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ABSTRACT

It is usually not the outcome of battles, but the way the conflict is terminated, that has a long-term impact on the warring parties' future. Our national political leaders determine the desired end-state to be achieved as a result of using the military instrument of power to achieve our national strategic objectives. The operational commander and his staff must understand the nature of conflict termination and the post-conflict activities so that they will be able to effectively translate the desired end state into the military conditions required to achieve our strategic objectives. Conflict termination involves more than merely ending the hostilities. Interagency coordination is an absolute necessity. Unity of effort among government agencies, such as the State Department, Agency for International Development, nongovernmental organizations and private voluntary organizations is required for success planning and execution of civil military operations. Furthermore, conflict termination must be considered early in the campaign planning process. One can draw several valuable lessons from our experience with Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama.

CONFLICT TERMINATION: EVERY CONFLICT MUST END

INTRODUCTION

Basil H. Liddell Hart wrote, "The object in war is a better state of peace even if only from your own point of view . . . It is essential to conduct war with constant regard to the peace you desire."[1] Warfare has been one of the most fascinating phenomena in man's history. Furthermore, war has been the primary instrument of social change. Empires and single states have risen or fallen based on how they fared on the battlefield. However, it is usually not the outcome of battles, but the way the conflict is terminated, that has a long-term impact on the warring parties' future. Fred Ikle, who wrote one of the most thought-provoking books on the subject, stated:

> This imbalance in the understanding of past wars affects how political leaders and military planners will approach questions of war and peace in the future. Regarding the beginning of wars, they can call on historic data, rich concepts, and extensive prior planning: how to deter aggression, how diplomacy might avert the outbreak of war, how to mobilize forces, and how to design the initial military campaigns. Much less is known about how to bring a war, once started, to a satisfactory end.[2]

Conflict termination may mean different things to different nations. When Americans go to war, we want to roll up our sleeves, rush into battle, crush the enemy, dust ourselves off, and proceed with life as before. We tend to view war as an interruption of the normal state of peace. As Russell Wiegley seems to suggest in *The American Way of War*, Americans want an unambiguous start, a short war, and total victory.[3] Unfortunately, our earnest desire for a "better state of peace"

frequently confronts the reality of unanticipated political and social change. This has led to numerous incongruencies between the national aims and the military means to achieve those aims. Some examples include the post-World War II Communist occupation in eastern Europe, political and military failures during the Vietnam War, and continued hostilities and military intervention after Desert Storm. That our wars haven't ended neatly is frustrating, yet we have often eagerly embraced minimally satisfying "settlements" to conflicts during the last 40 years.

Conflict termination conjures up thoughts of peace, tranquillity, and the restoration of the peaceful conditions prevalent in the pre-conflict period. This, however, oversimplifies the complex nature of conflict termination. The operational commander and his staff must understand the nature of conflict termination and the post-conflict activities so that they will be able to effectively translate the desired end state into the military conditions required to achieve our strategic objectives. In this paper, I will present some basic concepts on the nature of conflict termination and the cessation of hostilities. Next, I will outline issues the campaign planner must consider when planning a military campaign in terms of conflict termination and the post-hostility activities. Finally, I will briefly analyze the conflict termination and post-hostility activities of Operation JUST CAUSE and draw some lessons to be learned from that experience.

NATURE OF CONFLICT TERMINATION

The objective of the conflict termination phase is to restore the peace found prior to the conflict. Conflict termination involves more than merely ending hostilities. If this were the only criterion, then the state's leadership could simply decide to stop fighting. Fred Ikle, in his seminal work on war termination, *Every War Must End*, states military officers often fail to perceive that it is the outcome of the war, not the outcome of the campaigns within it, that determines how well our campaigns serve the nation's interests.[4] An example from history illustrates this point very well. Three months before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Emperor of Japan asked the Army Chief of Staff, Sugiyama, how long it would take the army to finish the war against the United States. Sugiyama answered that the Japanese military would terminate operations in the Pacific in three months. The Emperor knew this could not possibly be done in only three months, pointing out that Sugiyama had previously told him the Manchurian campaign would be over in one month. The campaign had then been going on for over four years. Ikle observes:

> Since Japan became involved in a war with the United States neither gradually nor inadvertently, but by a considered and clear-cut decision, one would expect the Japanese military to have had some ideas about how they would reach a successful conclusion in the gigantic undertaking that they proposed.[5]

The Pearl Harbor attack was one of the most successful military operations in history. However, the attack did little to serve Japan's interests in the war. For Japan the outcome of the war was certainly not successful. Many times states devote great resources and effort developing great militaries (means), and spend little effort relating the means to their national aims and objectives (ends).

Another example is Germany's reaction after the defeat of France in 1940 and driving Britain off the Continent. According to Field Marshall Erich von Manstein, "And so Hitler and O.K.W. found themselves wondering `What next?'. . It was quite obvious that prior to--or even during--the offensive in France, Germany's supreme command had no kind of 'war plan' to determine what measure should be taken once the victories it hoped for had been won."[6]

One might question whether the Japanese and German examples were the military's failure or the politicians' failure. The answer is both. The national political leaders determine the "ends"—our national strategic objectives and, to some extent, the "means"--the resources used to achieve the specified end state. Obviously, decisions at this level are always political decisions. However, to terminate the conflict on favorable terms, one must first consider the nature of the conflict and our national objectives. A state would not risk its survival or commit all its resources for limited political objectives. To that end, Carl von Clausewitz wrote:

> War plans cover every aspect of a war, and weave them all into a single operation that must have a single, ultimate objective in which all particular aims are reconciled. No one starts a war--or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so--without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is its political purpose; the latter its operational objective. This is the governing principle that will set its course, prescribe the scale of means and effort that is required, and makes its influence felt throughout down to the smallest operational detail.[7]

Next, a state must have a strategy to achieve its national strategic objectives. This is often "where the strategic process breaks down because the national strategic objectives are obscure . . . Indeed, while national policy goals often are reasonably well articulated, rarely are these translated into strategic political-military objectives expressed as [desired] end-states and attainable supporting objectives."[8] According to Joint Publication 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, "The desired end-state should be clearly described by the NCA [National Command Authorities] before Armed Forces of the United States are committed to an action. An end state is the set of required conditions [political, economic, and military] that achieve the strategic objectives."[9] Furthermore, the Joint Publication 3-0 goes on to state that "defining the end state, which may change as the operation progresses, and ensuring it suports achieving national objectives are the critical first steps in the estimate and planning process."[10] If the desired end-state is not clearly articulated, the military leaders must ask the political leaders to clarify the end-state. If it is still not done, the military leaders must formulate the desired end-state and ask the

political leaders to approve it. Next, the military leaders must develop strategic and operational strategies that link the national strategic objectives and military operational objectives. Basil H. Liddell-Hart, in his book *Strategy*, stated:

> Strategy depends for success, first and most, on a sound calculation and coordination of the ends and means. The end must be proportioned to the total means, and the means used in gaining each intermediate end which contributes to the ultimate must be proportioned to the value and the needs of the intermediate end--whether it be to gain an objective or to fulfill a contributory purpose.[11]

Furthermore, it is the military leader's responsibility to translate the desired end-state into executable military objectives and allocate the available resources—operational design--to achieve the desired end-state, and thus, the national strategic objectives.

Conflict termination, then, should be viewed as the bridge over which armed conflict crosses into more peaceful forms of interaction. The operational commander is rarely concerned with only the military end state conditions. "Often, combatant commanders may be required to support the other instruments of national power [political, economic, and informational] as directed by national and multinational leadership."[12] Furthermore, he must establish well-defined goals and objectives into an exit strategy or clearly identifiable conflict termination conditions. Consequently, conflict termination is the study of how to connect military means and military ends to the larger political objectives of a conflict. For the campaign planner, the issue is this: how does the operational commander

effectively translate the political or military objectives of a conflict into campaign termination conditions to be achieved as the product of a campaign? Specifically the joint doctrine publications do not address planning considerations in detail.

However, the best test of a successful conflict termination plan is whether the "vanquished" party embraces the outcome. Unless total annihilation of the enemy is achieved, as in Rome's last war with Carthage, conflict termination must consider the needs of the defeated, both domestically and internationally. H. A. Calahan writes, "war is pressed by the victor, but peace is made by the vanquished. Therefore, to determine the causes of peace, it is always necessary to take the vanquished's point of view."[13] Failure to structure the post conflict peace with the vanquished's needs in mind is the first step towards starting the next war. Some critics argue our conflict termination strategy in the Gulf War was unsuccessful because Saddam Hussein is still in power with a potentially threatening military force.

POST-CONFLICT ACTIVITIES

The cessation of hostilities is not the last stop in conflict termination. The last step is the effective implementation of post-conflict activities. Joint Publication 3-0 states, "A period of post-conflict activities exists from the immediate end of the conflict to the redeployment of the last US Service member. These operations involve all instruments of national power and include those actions that ensure political objectives are achieved and sustained."[14] Warring states have

rarely achieved complete settlement of the issues over which they fought. Many times the underlying causes of the dispute remain. Post-conflict activities occur in this type of environment. Military post-conflict activities may include humanitarian assistance, nation assistance, civil affairs, and possibly peace operations. "The objective of these activities is to restore order and tranquillity to a previously hostile environment."[15] These post-conflict activities try to meet the needs of the noncombatants.

Critical to the success of post-hostility operations is the unity of effort by three main groups of players. The first group of players are the government agencies, such as the State Department, Central Intelligence Agency, Agency for International Development (AID), U.S. Information Agency (USIA), Justice Department, Commerce Department, and others. The second group of players includes allies, coalition partners, United Nations, private voluntary organizations (PVOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Unity of effort among these groups of players is essential for successful planning and execution of civil-military operations. Interagency coordination is an absolute must. Joint Publication 3-08, *Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations, Volume I*, states, "To the extent feasible, joint planning should include all the participants from the outset. . . . Interagency forums established early at the operational level will enable close and constructive dialogue between the engaged agency."[16] As always, the fundamental question that should be asked is--what do we want the situation

to look like after the conflict when order is restored? The answer to this will dictate the level of involvement and planning required for conducting post-conflict activities.

To be successful in conflict termination, the military must provide a secure and stable environment for the conduct of post-conflict activities. As Rampy pointed out:

> Therefore, post-conflict activities will most likely begin with a predominance of military control and influence and progressively move toward civilian dominance as hostilities wane. Conflict termination must be an element of operational design to prevent an uncontrollable situation during post-conflict activities. While the political decision makers have the official responsibility for conducting post-conflict activities, the military's organizational ability in applying resources rapidly in a crisis means that they will have the most *de facto* lead in most post-conflict activities until a smooth transition can be made to civilian control.[17]

This was certainly the case in the post Desert Storm activities, especially with Operation PROVIDE COMFORT. According to Fishel,

> President George Bush's rhetoric calling for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein gave the Kurds of northern Iraq just the impetus they required to rebel. But when Iraqi forces assumed an offensive posture and the United States led coalition took no action to stop Saddam, the rebellion fell apart. Jubilation turned to panic as hundreds of thousands of Kurds abandoned their homes and sought refuge over the borders of neighboring Turkey and Iran.[18]

The Kurdish refugees in Turkey fled above the snow line on the grounds that the Iraqi force would not follow them. Thousands would die each day due to disease, malnutrition,

and exposure. After media reports of the Kurdish refugee situation attracted the world's attention, President Bush directed U.S. forces to begin humanitarian assistance operations to help the Kurds. Besides the military organizations, the USAID, State Department, PVOs, NGOs, and other agencies got involved. The military had to stop the dying and "stabilize the situation". According to Fishel, providing security for the refugees was a major part of the story of Operation Provide Comfort."[19] Operation PROVIDE COMFORT represents one of the post-conflict operations that the United States has embarked upon the in the recent past. Post-conflict activities are an essential part of conflict termination.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CONFLICT TERMINATION

If its interests are directly threatened, the United States is willing to use military force in pursuit of its objectives. "When directed by the NCA to conduct military operations, the combatant commanders refine peacetime strategies and modify existing plans or develop campaign plans as appropriate. The result, expressed in terms of military objectives, military concepts, and resources (ends, ways, and means), provides guidance for a broad range of activities."[20] The challenge for the campaign planner is to define the military conditions and relate those conditions to the national objectives, based on the nature of the conflict scenario. Consequently, as James Reed points out:

> ...the process of explicitly and clearly defining terminal conditions is an important one, since it requires careful dialogue between civilian (strategic) and military (operational) leadership that may, in turn, offer some greater assurance that the defined end state is both politically acceptable and militarily attainable.[21]

For the campaign planner, conflict termination is a phase of military operations that must be considered early in the campaign planning process. Furthermore, campaign planners must plan the conflict termination issues in full coordination with war fighting. As John Fishel points out, the state's political and military leaders must define the political and military objectives in clearly-defined end-state terms with supporting objectives that are both military and civil-military in nature.[22] One must ask, "What do we want the situation to look like after the conflict phase? What is the nature of the settlement that we seek?" If the campaign planner does not know the answers to these questions, he/she must ask!

Consequently, Michael Rampy points out, "Effective conflict termination requires a continuous discussion and decision process between [sic] political decision makers, military strategists and the theater commander."[23] The national political leaders will ultimately decide when and, many times, how to terminate a conflict. However, these decision makers rely on senior military leaders for advice on terminating the conflict. The theater commander translates the political objectives into the operational design to coerce the adversary and induce conflict termination. He is in the best position to assess what is

possible in the theater of operations and whether his forces can achieve the desired end-state.

The campaign planners must identify a distinct conflict termination phase in their plan. They must not wait until after hostilities cease to begin thinking about termination issues and post-hostility activities. Fred Ikle, like Clausewitz, warned that military planners should not take the first steps toward war without considering the last steps. Consequently, every aspect of the campaign plan, such as target selection, rules of engagement, forces employed, and psychological operations, should be designed and evaluated according to contributions made or effect upon the clearly defined end-state to be achieved.[24] Furthermore the campaign planner must, according to Reed, "define the operational conditions to be produced during the terminal phase of the campaign in explicit, unambiguous terms. The absence of definition or detail in operational objectives may produce unintended consequences in the course of a campaign."[25] This should prompt increased communication between the civilian and military leadership ensuring congruence between operational objectives and the larger policy aims of a campaign.

OPERATION JUST CAUSE

On 20 December 1989, The U.S. military forces executed Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama to achieve four national strategic objectives: to protect American citizens, to defend democracy, to combat drug trafficking, and to protect the integrity of the Panama Canal treaties. Overall, the war-fighting plan was

extremely effective. The Panamanian Defense Force (PDF) was neutralized as a military force. Manuel Noriega, the defiant dictator, was removed from his position and captured. However, the post-hostilities phase of the military operation, Operation PROMOTE LIBERTY, was not as effective.

Our national political leaders never issued a clearly defined end-state for the operation in Panama. President Bush provided a political objective of reestablishing democracy in Panama, but Panama had no history of democracy to be restored. "The conditions which make for a functioning and self-sustaining democracy were not articulated."[26] An understanding of the historical and cultural context of the adversary's state would serve as the basis for realistically achieving the political conditions of the envisioned end-state.

The planning process for Operation PROMOTE LIBERTY also had serious problems. Specifically, the senior U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) leadership paid little attention to post-conflict planning. General Thurman, the SOUTHCOM Commander-in-Chief (CINC), stated "I did not spend five minutes on BLIND LOGIC [the civil-military operations restoration plan] during my briefing as incoming CINC in August [1989]. Once in Panama, the least of my problems at the time was BLIND LOGIC."[27] Furthermore, the planning for the conflict phase and the post-conflict phase was conducted separately. "This separation allowed the Pentagon to play to its strength and interest—deterring wars or fighting and winning wars. In fact, bifurcation turned post-conflict planning

above the SCJ-5 [USSOUTHCOM Directorate of Policy, Plans, and Strategy] level into an afterthought."[28]

Another problem area was the lack of interagency coordination in the planning states of Operation JUST CAUSE. The planning process was very compartmentalized. "From the very beginning, for 'security' reasons, the plan was restricted to DOD."[29] Consequently, U.S. government civilian agencies and the nongovernmental organizations and private voluntary organizations were not involved in the planning states of the civil-military operations. These agencies must play a legitimate role in developing the post-conflict conditions of the targeted state. "Security" reasons are not necessarily a good excuse. Many in the agencies likely to be involved in the post-conflict operations have security clearances. These people should be involved in the planning process. The military planners would be wise to consult with the State department and other agencies in the combat phase, as well. Certainly, the post-conflict phase demands the extensive participation of the State, AID, Justice, and many other agencies from the Ambassador's Country Team.

The military should have the lead in the planning process—for the combat phase, as well as the post-conflict phase. Certainly, "a major part of the planning will involve the hand-off from the military to civilian agency lead. The follow-on campaign plan may well be the State department or AID lead with the military in a support role for both planning and execution. Normally, the Ambassador will be the American official in charge of conducting U.S. policy in the foreign country.

CONCLUSION

Conflict termination involves more than merely ending the hostilities. It involves the transition from war to peace. The goal after any conflict should be a better state of peace. For us, conflict termination is the study of how to connect military means and military ends to the larger political objectives of a conflict—the desired end-state. Our Joint publications state that planners should consider what may be necessary to end the armed conflict and what post-conflict activities are likely to follow.

To avoid Ikle's criticism, military officers should recognize that it's the outcome of the war, not the outcome of their operational campaigns, that determines how well the campaigns serve the nation's interests. The military must translate the initial political and military objectives of a conflict into conflict termination conditions that will achieve the political leaders' desired end-state of the campaign. This is the challenge for the campaign planner.

In addition, the campaign planners must identify a conflict termination phase early in the campaign planning process. Every aspect of the campaign plan should contribute to achieving the desired end-state. By taking the elements of conflict termination into account, campaign planners will contribute to the successful termination of future conflicts. In the future these planners will realize that the effective conflict termination plans will contribute to outcomes that serve the nation's interests.

ENDNOTES

[1] Basil H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy*, 2d ed. (New York, Meridian, 1967), 353.
[2] Fred C. Ikle, *Every War Must End*, Revised ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), vii.
[3]Russell Wiegley, *American Way of War*, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973) (book's thesis).
[4] Ibid., 2.
[5] Ibid., 3.
[6] Field Marshal Erich von Manstein, *Lost Victories*, edited and translated by Anthony G. Powell (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1982), 152-153.
[7] Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1989), 579.
[8]John T. Fishel, *Liberation, Occupation, and Rescue: War Termination and Desert Storm* (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992), 2.
[9] Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations* (Washington D.C., 1995), III-2.
[10] Ibid.
[11] Hart, 322-3.
[12] Joint Pub 3-0, III-2.
[13] H. A. Calahan, *What Makes a War End?* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1944), 18.
[14] Joint Pub 3-0, III-23.
[15]Michael R. Rampy, "The Endgame: Conflict Termination and Post-Conflict Activities," *Military Review* (October 1992), 53.
[16] Joint Publication 3-08, *Interagency Coordination During Joint Operations* (Washington D.C., 1996), III-1.
[17] Ibid., 54.
[18] Fishel, 51
[19] Fishel, 56.
[20] Joint Pub 3-0, III-2.
[21] James W. Reed, "Should Deterrence Fail: War Termination in Campaign Planning," *Parameters* (Summer 1993), 14.
[22] Fishel, 69.
[23] Rampy, 50.
[24] Reed, 49.
[25] Ibid.
[26] John T. Fishel, The Fog of Peace: Planning and Executing the Restoration of Panama (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute 1992), 66.
[27] Richard H. Shultz, Jr., In the Aftermath of War: US Support for Reconstruction and Nation-Building in Panama Following Just Cause (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press 1993), 68-9.
[28] Ibid., 69.
[29] Ibid.

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