



National Commission on the Future of the Army

2530 Crystal Drive, Zachary Taylor Building, Suite 5000
Arlington, VA 22202

SUBJECT: Operational Subcommittee Classified Army Strategist Panel on the Future Operational Environment, 13 August 2015, Minutes

Date: 13 August 2015

Time: 1300-1431 Hours

Location: Room 3E387, 103 Army Pentagon, Washington DC 20310

Format: Round table classified discussion

Attendees:

COMMISSION PARTICIPANTS:

HON Dr. Kathleen Hicks, Commissioner

LTG (R) Jack Stultz, Commissioner

MAJ Vinson Morris, Operational Subcommittee Designated Federal Officer (DFO)

MAJ Cory Simpson, DFO Legal Advisor

HQDA PARTICIPANTS:

LTG Robert Brown, Combined Arms Center, Commander

LTG Mary Legere, Deputy Chief of Staff G-2, Department of the Army

LTG H.R. McMaster, Deputy Commanding General Training and Doctrine Commander, Futures

MG William (Bill) Hix, Deputy Chief of Staff G-3/5/7 Strategy, Department of the Army

Mr. Mike Pappas, Department of the Army G-2 staff

Mr. David J. Clark, Department of the Army G-2 staff

Documents Submitted to Commission:

1. U.S. Army Capacity: A Strategic Choice
2. Continuity and Change: The Army Operating Concept and Clear Thinking About Future War
3. 8 Unique Values: Why America Needs The Army
4. Conventional Deterrence in the Second Nuclear Age
5. Professor Eliot Cohen Transcript: The Strategic Utility of Land Power
6. Army Warfighting Challenges
7. TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1: The U.S. Army Operating Concept "Win in a Complex World"
8. "The World We Live In ..." Army Future Operational Environment slides
9. Return on Investment Comparison slide

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Meeting Summary

The Operational Subcommittee met with four Army General Officers and two Technical Advisors to discuss the future operational environment driving Army mission requirements. The meeting started at 1:12 p.m. with opening remarks from the Operational Sub-Committee Chair and Designated Federal Official, who explained the application of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA).

The Operational Subcommittee staff initiated the discussion of the Army G-2 slides depicting “The World We Live In ...” as presented to the full Commission in May 2015.

The following are points from the discussion:

- Armed conflict remains land based due to political competition over the control of land and populations.
- The future operational environment is ripe with emerging threats, which include growing near peer adversaries, Sunni civil war, and Sunni-Shia conflict among many other issues.
- The threats to US forces should not be ranked because the threats all exist at once and the threat depends on the changing capability, capacity, and intent of potential adversaries.
- US actions should try to get “left of the bang,” which requires perpetually engaged intelligence assets. At present, US lacks sufficient understanding of potential adversaries.
- US forces cannot rely on the current technology advantage due to the ease of technology transfer and adversary adaptations.
- There are two ways to fight the US military, “asymmetrically or stupid.” Our enemies are getting very good at not becoming a target. As the enemy is becoming harder to detect, the electromagnetic signature is making US forces more transparent and easier to detect.
- “Nation building” will continue to be a requirement for US military – as it was in Korea, Panama, Philippines, etc.
- Several state actors are trying to alter the geopolitical landscape for their benefit by waging hybrid operations. US sequential approach to military operations is out of synch with adversaries, who are operating in multiple phases simultaneously and attempting to operate below the US military intervention threshold.

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- Deterrence by denial v. Deterrence by punishment. Deterrence by denial is better than deterrence by punishment. To accomplish deterrence by denial, the US needs forward stationed troops. Additionally, forward stationed troops reduce reaction times for a US response, which is necessary, as future adversaries will not give the US time to prepare like Saddam Hussein did in 1990.
- The US is extracting itself from the world at a time while also trying to do more in the world. We need to resolve this tension.
- The Army requires sufficient capacity and capability to work with multiple partners and provide multiple dilemmas to adversaries. With regard to time, the US will not “own the clock” on the next military operation. Stationing decisions are vital, especially for deterrence, but if needed US could punish, quickly.
- Empowering Soldiers and teams with technology will pay dividends. The technology that pays the highest dividends is the technology that most greatly empowers Soldiers.
- We need to do better at accessions into the Army. People are our advantage and what make the US force great, not technology. Soldiers get to do things in the Army that cannot be done anywhere else. This is what is unique about the Army. The Army needs to market this concept, and then ensure it allows Soldiers to do these things once a member of the Army team.
- The fog of war will remain; however, the fog will be caused more by too much information rather than too little.
- Reference was made to the book, “The Starfish and the Spider” by Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, published by the Penguin Group, 2006. The Army needs leaders that can thrive in a starfish environment.
- We need to look at how we manage talent in the Army. Ideas presented include promoting by talent, not by year group.
- The land domain has been the most contested domain since 2001. However, DoD invests little in modernizing ground systems compared to other domains (i.e. air, sea, space, and cyberspace). Army also has smallest investment in its institutional side compared to the other services.
- Reference was made to War in the Gulf, 1990-91 *The Iraq-Kuwait Conflict and Its Implications*, by Majid Khadduri and Edmund Ghareeb. Oxford University Press. 1997.

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- Reemerging peer/near peer competition is possibility.
- Our understanding of enemy's mentality is inadequate.
- There is a need to better understand the Sunni v. Shia conflict.

The meeting adjourned at 1431hrs.