

LETTERS

To the Editor—I have completed Joint Professional Military Education Phase I at the Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. From this education, I have become more discouraged rather than encouraged about the Services' desire to become more joint. The CGSC has done an outstanding job in its curriculum. Joint doctrine has been taught and discussed, each Service's capabilities and weaknesses have been reviewed, and the importance of coordinating and synchronizing each Service's actions has been stressed, but it seems something is missing.

The CGSC curriculum is full of historical and current examples of operations where two or more of our Services have come together to fight the Nation's wars with varying levels of success. Yet at the same time, we review case studies involving finger pointing between the Services in Operation *Anaconda*, discuss the relevance of the F-22 versus growing the Army for the counterinsurgency fight, read articles in Force Management class about how each Service fights for limited resources through the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution System (PPBES), and hear about debates at the highest levels of leadership over which Service is best suited to be the "lead" agency for the unmanned aerial vehicle. These heated topics do not scratch the surface of the friction between the Services in their struggle for legitimacy and scarce resources. These issues are indicators that although each Service is dedicated to achieving national security objectives, there are distracters that reduce a Service's full effort toward national security.

One of the overarching concepts for operational art is, for instance, ends, ways, and means. In this light, the *ends* are the operational objectives directed by the combatant commander, *ways* are the methods in which the means are employed, namely doctrine, and *means* are the personnel and equipment of each Service. This being said, each Service's contribution to the means through the PPBES and to the ways through joint doctrine puts the Services in direct competition rather than in a cooperative environment. In our time of limited resources and elusive adversaries, our efforts should not be hampered by inter-Service rivalry and irreconcilable doctrine. It is necessary to further the goals of the Goldwater-Nichols Act by changing the system to allocate

resources and redesigning doctrine so that the Services fight from one consolidated "playbook" rather than a "scrapbook" of irreconcilable doctrine.

Joint doctrine is the area that could improve jointness among the Services. Currently, joint doctrine has been described as the "skim milk" of doctrine; it is what remains after all of the "good stuff" has been removed. It seems that if two Services cannot agree on a concept to be placed in joint doctrine, then it should simply be *omitted* from the document and written in the respective Service's doctrine. This method sets up each Service for increased friction when they must come together in the joint fight. A change to the current system of doctrine would be to require U.S. Joint Forces Command to develop the doctrine for the Services, with the only purpose for specific Service doctrine being to clarify joint doctrine to the Service's lower echelons. This idea also builds each Service as a *joint* force from the beginning, rather than attempting to find common ground and concessions during the joint fight.

Joint should be more than knowing each Service's capabilities and weaknesses, deconflicting fires, and establishing the supported and supporting commander. *Joint* must be more than finding compromises between Services during conflict. *Joint* should be established at the beginning of the process, with each Service growing its personnel and designing its equipment with jointness in mind. In doing so, when it is time to bring two or more Services together in a conflict, joint operations will be a natural rather than an uncomfortable phenomenon.

—Major Robert H. Bryant, USA

To the Editor—In the last two issues of *Joint Force Quarterly*, you have featured articles that address the long-term costs of irregular and hybrid conflicts. One of my greatest concerns is the hidden cost of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). While we say that we are destigmatizing PTSD within the Armed Forces, a diagnosis of PTSD effectively shuts the door to many kinds of future civilian employment when our warriors conclude their military service.

I recently spoke to a Reserve lance corporal in my command who has been diagnosed with a mild case of PTSD. He was certified by medical authorities as fully deployable and stated that he felt he was making good progress through the Veterans' Administration

hospital. However, when he recently came off Active duty and went to apply for a job with the Transportation Security Agency as a baggage inspector, he was denied consideration for the position due to the PTSD diagnosis. When I asked him how we could help, he replied, "General, how is it that I am fully qualified to go back to combat and carry a weapon, but not qualified to inspect bags at an airport?"

I did not have a good answer for him, but we did succeed at finding him other employment.

—Major General Michael R. Lehnert,
USMC, Commanding General,
Marine Corps Installations West

To the Editor—Like Lieutenant Colonel John Nagl, I appreciate the spirited discussion and important debate on matters of national defense and future conflict. Dr. Nagl is one of the most articulate and forceful of the writers who call for the liberal use of American military and national power in the troubled spots of the world that could threaten American interests to, as he has said, "change entire societies."

In a recent *Joint Force Quarterly* letter to the editor (2^d Quarter, 2009), Dr. Nagl argued that I had quoted him out of context in an article that I wrote for *JFQ* (1st Quarter, 2009) on the future of the American Army. According to Dr. Nagl, I took a statement that he made in a recent review that he wrote of Brian Linn's *The Echo of Battle* out of context by incorrectly substituting the word *Army* for his word *soldier* when referring to what I said was the Army's ability to, using Dr. Nagl's words, "change entire societies." His response was that others who are familiar with these kinds of dialogues would understand his meaning to be of "soldiers" as a metaphor for a broader point beyond the Army about an interagency and whole-of-government approach for counterinsurgency and nation-building. Hence his accusation that I quoted him out of context.

I disagree. In the review of Linn's book, which is an intellectual history of the American Army, Dr. Nagl used the word *Army* as a proper noun at least 23 times. Most reasonable folks in America associate the word *Soldier* with the Army, just as they do *Marines* with the Marine Corps and *Airmen* with the Air Force. The context in which I quoted Nagl was correct and an accurate reflection of the points that he made in his review of Linn's book.

In fact, Dr. Nagl's letter, where he accuses me of taking him out of context, actually further proves what I have said about his vision for the future and the role of America in the world. Simply put, this role is to use American military power, however much it is reinforced by American civilian agencies, to intervene in the world's troubled spots and, again, "change entire societies."

If the American Army is directed by its political masters to do more interventions and nationbuilding in the troubled spots of the world, then that is exactly what we must do.

Unfortunately, the Army that Dr. Nagl and other counterinsurgency experts are calling for, one built around the principles of nationbuilding and counterinsurgency, will not be able to fight when we get there. Instead, it will be optimized for nationbuilding but not for fighting at the higher end of the conflict spectrum. History has shown that it is easier for a force trained and organized to fight to step in different directions to do counterinsurgency and nationbuilding. This principle does not work well in reverse.

Moreover, the continuing drive to see all problems of volatility and insurgencies in the world's unstable areas as a call to use American military power to build or rebuild nations actually produces a one-way-only approach to American security. The new way of American counterinsurgency—and war writ large, advocated by defense thinkers such as Nagl—demands an approach of nationbuilding by focusing on civilian populations. Now as a problem of instability pops up that touches on American interests, the only seeming solution is to send in large numbers of American combat forces to protect the populations, separate the insurgents from the people, and build new nations by changing foreign societies.

This approach is nothing less than fanciful, and it is reinforced by the American Army because it is the only way we have come to view the world and how to use military and national power in it. While this might make the American Army happy because we can isolate ourselves in our tactical and operational worlds (just as we did in the 1980s), it is not the basis for good strategy and military advice for policy.

It is time to break out of this straitjacket for the good of the Army and, more importantly, for the good of the Nation that we are sworn to protect and serve.

—Colonel Gian P. Gentile, USA

[V]ictory in the Long War requires the strengthening of literally dozens of governments afflicted by insurgents who are radicalized by hatred and inspired by fear. The soldiers who win these wars require not just an ability to dominate land operations, but to change entire societies—and not all of those soldiers will wear uniforms, or work for the Department of the Army. The most important warriors of the current century may work for the US Information Agency rather than the Department of Defense.

—from John A. Nagl's review of Brian McAllister Linn's *The Echo of Battle*, in *The Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, April 2008

To the Editor—In the 20th century, the primary problem of international relations was dealing with states that were too strong to fit comfortably within their own borders—first Germany, then Germany and Japan, and finally the Soviet Union. In this century, the primary problem of international relations may well be states that are too weak to control what happens within their borders—Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mexico. These states are not fully sovereign; they cannot completely control what happens on their territory. In these ungoverned lands grow non-state actors such as the Taliban, al Qaeda, and narcotraffickers that present a clear and present danger to the people of the United States and the security of the world.

This change in the nature of the threat that we face demands new thinking about the security of America. The tank divisions that I was honored to serve in for 20 years were the right organizations to deter the Soviet Union across the Fulda Gap and to destroy Saddam Hussein's army—not just once, but twice. Tank divisions remain necessary to deter conventional aggression against our friends, but they are no longer sufficient. The challenges of the 21st century demand new national security organizations, designed not only to defeat our enemies but also to strengthen our friends.

President Barack Obama's recent speeches on American strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan highlighted the changes required in our force structure to deal with today's threats. In Iraq, Army Brigade Combat Teams will be replaced next summer with Advisory and Assistance Brigades, optimized to help the Iraqi army more capably deal with the internal and external threats that a recovering Iraq still faces. In Afghanistan, a brigade of the famed 82^d Air-

borne Division will be reconfigured not to fight al Qaeda and the Taliban, but to advise and assist the Afghan National Army and Police to do so.

These changes are long overdue, but they are insufficient to build a lasting peace. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, small armies of civilian experts will work to improve governance, help the economy grow, and win the war of ideas—an effort that, over time, will work to change the nature of Iraqi and Afghan societies. It does no good to capture or kill terrorists and insurgents if the conditions that spawned them are not corrected; too many *madrassas* in Pakistan currently work to produce a generation of young people convinced that all of their problems stem from American policies. To win this war, we must change the curriculum in dozens of countries from one that preaches hate to one that engenders hope. That is not a fight for soldiers who wear uniforms, but a battle that can and must be won by civilians from expanded and expeditionary Departments of State, Agriculture, Justice, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. New wars demand new warriors, but to date we have shamefully neglected the transformation of our civilian instruments of national power.

The United States cannot eliminate the hatred, hopelessness, and fear abroad that led to the attacks of September 11 and a series of successive acts of terror. However, the Nation can work to change those conditions, and in doing so demonstrate that it stands for something more than the destruction of human potential that our enemies profess. In places such as Iraq and Afghanistan, where the governing structures have been destroyed and our opponents have been allowed to gain strength, changing those conditions may require the commitment of large bodies of American troops for a number of years. In most of the world, we can work to improve societies, reduce hatred, and build hope with a far smaller footprint; the counterinsurgency campaign in the Philippines, not the one in Iraq, should be our objective. In counterinsurgency campaigns both large and small, we must work to provide security for the population to set the conditions in which they can develop strong economies and good structures of governance. That is the challenge of this century for a new generation of Americans. For the security of our children, we cannot falter in this fight.

—Dr. John A. Nagl
President,
Center for a New American Security