

by the same author

GANGS AND COUNTER-GANGS
BUNCH OF FIVE
LOW INTENSITY OPERATIONS
WARFARE AS A WHOLE

DIRECTING
OPERATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

War can best be defined as the use of force in pursuit of a nation's interests, or, in the case of internal strife, in pursuit of the interests of a group within a nation. It manifests itself in a wide variety of forms from subversion, insurgency and civil war, which are concerned with internal strife, to international wars limited in terms either of the weapons used or of the geographical area affected, and finally to all-out war in which no limitations apply.

The outcome of any war depends on many factors such as the moral and physical strength of the parties concerned and the extent to which they are prepared for the conflict. It also depends on the way in which the armed forces and the police are organized, trained and equipped, and above all on the resources which are available to back them. In peacetime a country's intelligence organization collects information about its potential enemies on all these subjects, in the hope of working out whether hostilities could be waged successfully, if necessary, and to indicate what further preparations are required. But, in practice, the outcome of a war would be likely to depend to a considerable extent on another totally different factor; a factor which it would be hard for any intelligence organization to assess with any degree of accuracy.

This factor concerns the way in which operations are directed. From the top, right down to the smallest unit or sub-unit, it is the commander who is responsible for directing operations, which includes, among many other activities, the

all-important task of seeing that his men are willing and determined to fight. Although at the lower levels of command a few weak links in the chain may have to be accepted, nothing can compensate for shortcomings at the top. A first-class operational commander will often succeed, despite all sorts of handicaps, and an indifferent one fail, despite many advantages, if confronted by a well-led enemy. Virtually no price is too great to pay to ensure that only the very best men occupy the higher command positions and that they are properly prepared to carry out their tasks.

This is particularly important in the nuclear age because in a major war the most vital part, i.e. the part that determines whether nuclear weapons will be used, with all that that entails, could well take place at the very beginning when both sides will be fighting hard to get themselves into a favourable position to negotiate a cease-fire. Although it is not certain that a major war would develop in this way, it is at least likely to do so and, if it did, there would be no time to replace a run-of-the-mill commander with one who really knows his job.

Although the business of directing operations varies in terms of scale from the bottom upwards, it has one thing in common at every level which is that it always involves working out how to apply resources, within a given set of circumstances, for the purpose of achieving a specific aim and then seeing that the arrangements decided on are put into effect. The exercise of operational command is therefore always a test of both intellect and will-power. Many other problems face those operational commanders whose job includes looking after a large number of soldiers or dealing with the representatives of the civil government, but in all cases a commander's job involves constantly adjusting his plans to take account of changing circumstances. Although commanders at unit level and upwards have staff officers to help them carry out their functions, it is still their responsibility to contribute to and endorse the combined intellectual contribution and they alone can provide the requisite will-power.

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Ideally, in order to prepare an officer for his task as a commander, he must study the theoretical side of war on the one hand and get as much practical experience of it as he can on the other. Practical experience can be got either by taking part in operations or, where this is not possible, by training. On the face of it this preparation should not be too difficult to arrange providing that sufficient priority is given to the matter.

But although there have been a number of successful commanders throughout the ages, history records the doings of a far greater number who were insufficiently prepared or even totally unable to handle the situations that they encountered. No doubt the reasons for this have varied from place to place and from age to age. For example, in the early stages of the Second World War senior British operational commanders found great difficulty in handling a large force because they were unable to orchestrate the performance of the various arms together with the available air support. It took Montgomery to show how this should be done. But whatever reasons there may have been for past failures, it is certainly worth trying to identify the problems that might lead to failure in the future in order to put the situation right, since there is no doubt that indifferent direction of operations will nullify much of the effort and expense that nations invest in securing their defence.

The purpose of this book is to examine in outline the way in which operations should be directed in the modern world and to assess the characteristics and skills that commanders most need with a view to identifying the arrangements required to prepare them for their task.

There are, of course, many tasks that officers have to carry out, in addition to directing operations. For example, there is always a requirement for people to help operational commanders as members of their staffs and others are wanted in administrative appointments and also as commanders and staff officers in the individual training organization. Others have to be prepared to undertake top-level appointments in a country's defence ministry. The business of preparing officers

to exercise operational command has therefore to be examined in conjunction with the problems of preparing them for all these other jobs, although they will only be considered here to the extent that they affect the preparations of operational commanders. This should not be taken as implying that these other jobs are unimportant. Far from it. The performance of any army in peace, as in war, depends to a great extent on the quality of its staff officers and in particular of those senior officers in the ministry, or department, of defence who direct its activities and have the responsibility for getting hold of the resources without which it cannot operate at all.

Many books have already been written in which the business of command has been analysed from a historical point of view, based on the qualities and achievements of the great captains of the past. Others have concentrated on historical disasters and on the character weaknesses of commanders who have failed. Books on military history constitute an essential source of study for those who wish to prepare themselves to direct operations, because they provide a mass of second-hand battle experience which often cannot be obtained in any other way. Indeed, almost all the great commanders of the past read avidly about the doings of their predecessors.

But this book lays no claim to scholarship, nor does it deal with military history to any significant extent. The intention is to deduce the qualities that senior operational commanders require, from an examination of what they have to do.

Although the author's own experience was gained in the British Army, the book is designed to be read by those interested in warlike activities throughout the world. None the less it is inevitably more relevant to the armies of the developed countries than it is to those who have not got the means of waging modern war. It is also more relevant to countries that are ruled by democratically-elected governments who are obliged to conduct themselves in accordance with the sensibilities of an electorate, than it is to totalitarian

governments who have greater freedom of action in terms of the way in which they handle warlike matters.

Naturally a book that is designed to be applicable over so wide an area, cannot go into detail regarding the specific requirements of each individual country. It therefore endeavours to identify principles and priorities concerned with preparing commanders to conduct all sorts of operations effectively, against which any country can work out its own requirements according to its circumstances. These circumstances can only be established by carrying out a review of the particular country's commitments, from which can be worked out priorities for preparing for one sort of war as opposed to another. This, in turn, governs the measures necessary for selecting and preparing commanders, as well as for establishing doctrine, procuring weapons, building up the order of battle and a whole lot of other requirements.

It is the business of defence ministries to carry out frequent and detailed reviews of this kind, using classified facts and figures about potential enemies and about their own resources and intentions, in order to establish the basis for the country's defence policy. It is also common practice for the authors of books and articles dealing with defence, to do the same in very general and unclassified terms, for the interest and information of the public at large. The author has himself produced just such a case-study into the position of the British army called *Warfare as a Whole*,¹ against which the findings of this work can be viewed. Readers interested in the detailed circumstances of other armies will have no difficulty in finding published material from which to draw their own conclusions, much of which is contained in the journals of national and international defence institutes.

This book is linked in a different way with *Warfare as a Whole* and with an earlier work by the author called *Lour Intensity Operations** Both these books were concerned with identifying situations likely to arise, working out how they should be handled, and then deciding what steps were necessary to make the army ready to handle them. In neither of these books was the problem of preparing people to direct

operations covered in any detail, so the analyses contained in this one could be said to fill the gap in the other two.

In short, the other two books not only provide a useful background against which to view the arguments contained in this one, but more important, the contents of this book provide a useful supplement to the material contained in the other two. Although each book is complete in itself, the three together loosely constitute a trilogy, despite the long period that has elapsed between the publication of the first and the third parts of it.

This book is divided into three parts. Part i attempts to outline what is involved in directing two types of operation that could be encountered in the conditions of today's world. The first is the all-out clash of armoured and mechanized forces that would almost certainly occur if, for example, the NATO alliance found itself at war with Russia. The second is the countering of insurgency which is the most prevalent type of war at the present time. There are many other sorts of operation that could come about, but the two types described cover the extremes and the demands on commanders engaged in the other sorts can, for the most part, be deduced from them. Passing reference is made, however, to the demands of other sorts of war where they differ markedly from those described.

In Part 2 the skills and characteristics which have to be nurtured and taught to potential operational commanders are analysed. In addition there is a discussion of the skills and characteristics needed by officers in other important positions, to show the effect which the need to induce them has on the selection and preparation of the operational commanders.

Part 3 consists of an attempt to show how these conflicting demands can be reconciled and the aim achieved.

In conclusion it must be emphasized that there are no easy answers to the problem of ensuring that competent operational commanders are always available. If there were they

would have been discovered and applied many years ago. But there are answers, even if they are not easy ones, the main difficulty about applying them being that remedial action would not only be uncomfortable, but would also require changing institutions that naturally lean towards continuity, stability and stagnation. Professional soldiers who only seek confirmation that traditional methods of producing commanders are sound, would be well advised to put this book down at once. By contrast, those that have no trouble in considering alternatives may find something in these pages to hold their interest, in which case they can safely read on.

Notes

- 1 Frank Kitson, *Warfare as a Whole*, Faber and Faber, London, 1987.
- 3 Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, Faber and Faber, London, 1971.

Part 1

LAND OPERATIONS

THE NUCLEAR AGE

The invention of nuclear weapons in the 1940s affected the very nature of war. Up to that time, the advent of new weapons had always resulted in men trying to work out how to get the maximum advantage from using them. From August 1945, when nuclear weapons were used with such devastating results for the people of Japan, men have been trying to work out how to wage war without using them. At the same time nations have tried to exploit the threat posed by the existence of nuclear weapons in such a way as to prevent large-scale wars from breaking out, while pursuing their national interests in less violent or non-violent ways. This has naturally had a fundamental effect on the way in which wars have been fought and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Another major influence on the conduct of war that has emerged over the past forty years and which to some extent complements the introduction of nuclear weapons, has been the rapid development of means of disseminating information and influencing public opinion. This has come about as a result of increased literacy and the ability of so many people even in the least developed parts of the world, to own, or have access to, transistor radios and television sets. Manifestations of this influence include an increased questioning of authority and a proliferation of dissent on the one hand, combined with an emotional detestation of nuclear weapons which makes it difficult for governments to take adequate steps to prevent their use by having an adequate supply of

their own to act as a deterrent. Increasingly military leaders are having to plan on using less than the capability of the resources available to them. This not only concerns nuclear weapons, but may extend to limiting the use that can be made of weapons in a conventional war, and in a different context it can even inhibit the full use of existing legal measures in the countering of insurgency.

Although in a general sense public opinion tends to support the cause of peace, in individual cases it can make it more difficult for peace to be maintained: in other situations, especially those involving a low level of violence, it may even succeed in prolonging a conflict. There is, of course, nothing new about public opinion influencing war and throughout recorded history people have tried to manipulate it to their own advantage. The fact that the means of influencing public opinion have become so much more effective merely means that greater care has to be taken to ensure that potential enemies do not take advantage of it, but that, on the contrary, it is mobilized in support of the country's interests.

In looking back over the past forty years, some satisfaction can be had from the fact that the two major nuclear powers and their allies have avoided fighting each other directly, despite the divergence of interest that has existed between them in terms of strategy, economics and ideology. But the avoidance of such a calamity does not mean that the world has been free of conflict. On the contrary, wars of one kind or another have been going on continuously throughout the period, many of which have been fought at a high level of intensity, over long periods and with heavy casualties. Although they may not have constituted disasters on the scale of the two world wars, the campaigns in Korea and Vietnam, and the wars that have taken place between the Arabs and Israel, between India and Pakistan and between Iran and Iraq would all register as significant outbreaks of fighting in a historical context. In addition, the endless series of insurrections that have occurred during the period, have brought with them a trail of misery for the people of the countries concerned.

But even the modest encouragement that might be gained from examining the scale of the wars that have taken place since 1945 is no guarantee for the future which can only be realistically forecast if the influence exerted by nuclear weapons and public opinion is properly understood. An outline examination of these influences, leading to an assessment of the sort of operations that are likely to take place, is therefore a necessary prelude to the study of how they should be directed.

The advent of nuclear weapons has given the countries that possess them, and the alliances to which they belong, the power to blow their opponents off the face of the earth. But if these opponents either have nuclear weapons themselves, or belong to alliances that have them, they can only be attacked with nuclear weapons at the risk of a disastrous nuclear riposte. Even an attack by conventional forces cannot be mounted for the purpose of defeating the enemy in battle without the risk of a nuclear response. The best that can be hoped for is that weaknesses in the defence can be exploited, and some quick gains made for use as bargaining counters in subsequent negotiations. If in the course of operations either side came near to defeat, the temptation for it to use nuclear weapons would become greater, despite the danger of a riposte. If sufficiently desperate, a country might use nuclear weapons in the hope of gaining a tactical advantage designed to restore the position on the battlefield, or in an attempt to force the winning side to the negotiating table as a prelude to ceasing hostilities altogether. But the moment one nuclear weapon was used, the likelihood of escalation to a major world disaster would be that much closer.

Thus it would seem that in a war between two nuclear alliances there is little possibility of either side winning in the classic sense of the word, that is to say of breaking the will of the opposing side entirely, so that it accepts whatever terms are forced on it. The best that can be hoped for is that if a war should break out by mischance or miscalculation, enough time could be gained by conventional forces to enable a

negotiated peace to be patched up before a nuclear exchange destroyed the world as we know it. In other words, the function of conventional forces in an open war between nuclear powers is not to win the war, but to gain time.

Of course, this oversimplifies a complicated situation. In the first place it would only hold good if the two sides were reasonably balanced in terms of their nuclear forces. For example, although they would not have to have the same number of weapons, they must each be able to inflict a level of damage on the other side that they would regard as intolerable. It is an immensely complicated business to achieve this, because it is dependent on so many technical factors such as detection arrangements, flight times and so on. In addition the exact nature of the nuclear balance may well affect the immediate aims of the conventional forces in terms of objectives that must be seized or held in a given time, and this qualifies the statement that conventional forces fight to gain time rather than victory.

Another factor that would affect the tasks allocated to conventional forces, is that the cease-fire negotiations themselves are dependent on the conventional forces managing to produce a situation on the ground that leaves good cards in the hands of their own negotiators. For example, if one side had important areas of its territory occupied by the other, it would inevitably prejudice its negotiating position.

Even if two non-nuclear powers are fighting each other, the existence of nuclear weapons in the hands of the superpowers may influence the way in which the war is fought, because the superpowers will start leaning on the warring parties to stop fighting as soon as there is any danger of the conflict spreading. As a result, the warring parties have to develop their operations in order to be in the best negotiating position at the moment they are obliged to stop fighting and will fight with this in mind rather than with the aim of breaking their opponent's will to resist. Only if both parties to the war are totally independent of any nuclear power, and if there is no danger of its escalating into a conflict that poses such a threat, would this proviso not apply. In this case the

parties concerned could bludgeon each other for as long and as hard as they liked.

The deduction that most naturally falls out of these considerations is that war fought by nuclear, or nuclear-backed powers, is likely to be fought at a great rate, with both attacker and defender trying to achieve their immediate aims before the imminence of a nuclear exchange brings a cease-fire. On the other hand, it is possible that an aggressor might try to achieve his ends gradually by nibbling a bit here and a bit there, without ever forcing the defender into such a state of despair that he is tempted to resort to nuclear weapons or cease-fire negotiations. It is unlikely that such a plan would be tried in a really critical area like the central region of NATO, but something like it could be attempted in other parts of the NATO area, or possibly in a war in the Middle East or Asia, or even at sea. But whatever happens in the future, there is no doubt that the position is totally different from that which existed before the introduction of nuclear weapons.

Another example of the influence of nuclear weapons is the increase that has taken place in the incidence of insurgency. While the existence of nuclear weapons makes it too dangerous for the major powers to confront each other at all, and often prevents non-nuclear powers from fighting to a finish with conventional weapons, it is still possible for a country to pursue its interests by fostering insurgency in an enemy's country or by exploiting an insurgency that has arisen there. Alternatively, it can foster or help an insurgency in the country of the enemy's ally. Certainly the incidence of insurgency seems to have increased since the advent of nuclear weapons, and when it occurs conventional forces are often tied up for years trying to suppress it. The great increase in the influence of public opinion has a bearing on this, as it tends to inhibit counter-insurgency action, thereby lengthening the period that insurgencies last.

Thus the fundamental factor regarding modern war is the existence of nuclear weapons. In the last resort they govern the level at which it manifests itself, and the way in which it is fought at each level. In practice they ensure that most war is

waged at a lower level of intensity than would otherwise be the case. Without nuclear weapons as they are distributed today, the world would be a more dangerous place and defence would cost a great deal more than it does now, because nations would have to be prepared to wage war for much longer. The aim of fighting major wars would no longer be to gain time for a cease-fire and would revert to breaking the enemy's will to fight which would certainly mean that all the Western nations would have to increase their conventional forces to a very considerable extent. It is only necessary to remember the vast scale of the wars that took place during the first half of this century, so clearly described in Lord Carver's recently published book,¹ to realize what would be involved in terms of numbers, but even that is only part of the story. Developments in the destructive power of conventional and chemical weapons, including their means of delivery, have been so extensive that a full-scale world war fought with them over an extended period might do as much damage as a brief exchange of nuclear weapons, especially if the resultant famine and disease are taken into account.

It is essential, however, to realize that the benefits which have been derived over the past forty years from the existence of nuclear weapons, have to some extent come from the way in which they have been distributed between the nations. Whether or not this distribution remains favourable to world peace in the future not only depends on the balance between Russia and the Western nations, but also on the way in which other countries develop their nuclear capabilities. The greater the number of nations that become nuclear powers, the more complicated will the business of preserving a balance become. The problem is how to control the balance rather than how to eliminate nuclear weapons altogether, because to eliminate them would be to forfeit the benefits which have accrued from their existence so far. But the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons depends not only on their destructive power but also on the ability of the countries or alliances that own them to wage war at lower levels of operational intensity as well, so that minor outbursts of hostility can be prevented from

escalating in a dangerous fashion. Only if these capabilities exist will rivalries involving nuclear powers be confined to the lower levels of warfare.

Another point that could affect the sort of operations that can be expected to take place in the foreseeable future, is disarmament. Although the deterrent effect of nuclear weapons seems to have produced a reasonably stable relationship between Russia and the West so far, the present situation is obviously dangerous and likely to become more so as other countries get hold of nuclear weapons. Ideally, disarmament should be aimed at making it impossible for nuclear powers or alliances to defeat each other with either nuclear or conventional forces, while leaving both sides capable of defending themselves against each other, and against third parties armed with nuclear or conventional weapons. This is the context within which sensible disarmament could take place, but there are considerable difficulties to be overcome before anything really impressive can be achieved.

One of the obstacles to large-scale nuclear disarmament is the fact that so many nuclear weapons have been amassed by Russia and the West in an attempt to establish layers of nuclear escalation, in addition to the escalatory safeguards provided by conventional forces. Originally the idea behind this was that when conventional forces could no longer hold an attack, short-range battlefield weapons could be used which would gain a little more time for negotiations and that even after that, an exchange of intermediate-range nuclear weapons could perhaps take place, confined to European countries, designed to gain even more time before finally strategic nuclear weapons were exchanged between Russia and America with disastrous consequences for the whole world.

Although no one can say categorically that this concept was impractical, it had two significant weaknesses. The first was the assumption that whichever side was the victim of the initial attack by short-range nuclear weapons, would respond at the same level. It is just as likely that, considering it impossible to halt escalation, the victim would try to gain

what advantage he could, by getting in his strategic strike first.

The second weakness was the notion that short-range weapons could be used to advantage at the point where the opposing sides were fighting. In practice it would be difficult to gain an advantage at that point which would incidentally be in the country of the defender. A nuclear strike on military targets well behind the attacker's front line, e.g. on his follow-up forces, tactical airfields or logistic bottle-necks, would be more effective in terms of the conventional battle and would not involve setting off nuclear explosions in the defender's own country. Furthermore, it would carry no greater risk of escalation than an attack by short-range weapons, since the purpose would be clearly related to the tactical battle between conventional forces.

The recent agreement between the Eastern and Western blocs to scrap intermediate-range nuclear weapons constitutes a genuine measure of disarmament. But it could be argued that in terms of deterring war in Europe, removing most of the short-range nuclear weapons which can not reach the enemy's follow-up forces anyway, would have made more sense. As it is, this interdiction role will have to be covered by increasing the range of some short-range land- or air-launched missiles to the maximum allowed by treaty for this category of weapon. In theory presumably strategic nuclear missiles could be employed for interdiction, but this might risk misunderstanding the purpose for which they were being used and it would also be uneconomic.

The next step in terms of disarmament will probably be to reduce the number of strategic weapons held by both sides by getting rid of the many held surplus to the requirements of deterrence. Whilst generally improving the atmosphere, this will not affect the balance of power to any significant extent and is irrelevant in the context of this book.

Another major problem will be to negotiate a balanced reduction of most of the short-range nuclear weapons in Europe that are not wanted for interdiction purposes. It is unlikely that all of them will go, because both sides may feel

the need to retain some as a deterrent against emerging nuclear powers in other parts of the world. Negotiating a reduction in short-range nuclear weapons will have to be done in conjunction with balancing conventional strengths between the main power blocs. In theory such a balance could possibly be achieved by increasing the conventional forces of the Western powers so that they could hold a Russian attack without using nuclear weapons. But this would be ruinously expensive and would, incidentally, involve providing the Western powers with a full range of chemical weapons: the present imbalance in this area is, in theory at least, compensated for by the West's holding of short-range nuclear weapons. A better arrangement would be for the Eastern bloc to reduce its conventional strength and dispose of its chemical capability so that each side would be able to defend itself without being able to over-run its opponent. It is as yet impossible to forecast whether the Russians will make major reductions in their conventional forces and dispose of their chemical capability, but it is safe to predict that NATO will not make a sufficiently large increase in theirs, merely to be able to reduce the number of short-range tactical missiles that they now hold. The expense would be enormous and the long-term effects would be little short of catastrophic, if the result was to be a major conventional war, for reasons already mentioned.

The effect that disarmament is likely to have on military operations over the next ten or twenty years can perhaps be summarized as follows. First, the removal of intermediate-range weapons, if it takes place as planned, is unlikely to affect the form that future military conventional operations will take providing that it is accompanied by adequate modernization of some short-range weapons. Second, any reduction that the Russians might make in their conventional and chemical forces, would make military operations in Europe less likely to take place, but would not greatly change the form that they would take, provided that the strategic deterrent remained effective. Third, a reduction in the number of Russian and American strategic missiles held surplus to that

needed for effective deterrence, would make no difference, and there is almost certainly scope for such a reduction. Reduction beyond this point would, of course, be disastrous, but is in any case unlikely.

There are two ways of coping with powers that have or are developing nuclear weapons, but who are not part of the two main power blocs. The first is to exert as much pressure as possible on them of an economic, political and strategic nature, from as many sources as possible, in order to prevent them from obtaining nuclear weapons. Such pressure would have to come from the existing nuclear powers and would have to include economic incentives and alliances to guarantee their security. Where this is not possible, as in the case of, say, China, it will be necessary to negotiate balances between the country concerned and the main nuclear power blocs. In some respects there could be advantages in a small number of responsible countries from outside the two main power blocs having nuclear weapons since, although complicating the business of deterrence, it might make it more stable. In practice, whether the great powers like it or not, a degree of proliferation is certain to take place which will not necessarily make the world less stable, nor alter the way in which armed forces are likely to operate in the foreseeable future.

The final topic for this chapter is the effect that the existence of nuclear weapons is likely to have on the role of civil government in exercising overall control of military operations. The extent to which governments have been able to control military operations and the way in which they have managed to do it, has varied greatly from age to age and from place to place. At one time rulers such as Frederick the Great or Napoleon combined in their person the government of their country and the leadership of the army, but this is hardly practicable in the modern world. Hitler tried it with disastrous results for the Germans, partly because he had neither the knowledge nor the experience to direct military operations and was not prepared to listen to those who had, but mainly because the complexity of a modern state makes it

impossible for one man to direct both at the same time. On the allied side, the lessons of the First World War led to a good balance being reached in the Second, between the functions of the political and the military leadership. But the system then used was dependent on two factors. First, that operations moved slowly enough for military plans to be worked out and submitted for consideration by the politicians before having to be put into effect. Second, that it was only the use of conventional military forces working under normal military leadership, that could achieve the victory that both sides wanted.

In the nuclear era these factors will not necessarily apply in the same way. Certainly in a critical situation such as would result from an all-out attack by Russian forces in the central region of NATO, events might move at breakneck speed and it would be extremely difficult for the military to keep the politicians fully up to date even regarding the existing position, never mind producing alternative courses of action to be considered for the future.

At the same time there is another significant difference which concerns the relative position of political and military leaders. It arises from the fact that the hour-to-hour fluctuations of military operations designed to achieve a favourable cease-fire at exactly the right moment must be susceptible to political interference to a far greater extent than was the case when military operations were directed towards breaking the enemy's will to fight. The possibility of having to authorize the use of nuclear weapons in the course of military operations would have a similar effect. Furthermore, these political interventions would have to be co-ordinated across the alliance in the same way as military operations have to be co-ordinated.

The implication of these two factors taken together is that the political and military leadership within each country of an alliance and the combined leadership of all the countries of the alliance, have to be tied together even more closely than they were in the Second World War. The mechanics of the problem in terms of procedures and communications have of

course been studied with great care over the years and have been worked out satisfactorily. But the question of whether the politicians could keep sufficiently closely in touch with military operations to exercise their ultimate function, without interfering before the arrival of the critical moment, is something that will only be discovered when the worst occurs. It is also questionable whether politicians armed with the machinery for intervening at speed in fast-moving operations, would be able to resist intervening at the wrong time in slower-moving operations. Certainly the nuclear age provides problems in this area that are very different from anything that has happened in the past.²

Before going on to describe the sort of military operations that are likely to be met with in the future, it is important to emphasize that all the different sorts are merely aspects of warfare as a whole and that they are closely linked and interact upon each other.

Warfare manifests itself in many different forms, the least intensive being subversion which is illegal activity, short of the use of armed force, taken by one section of the people of a country to overthrow those governing the country, or to force them to do things which they do not want to do. The next step up is insurgency which is what subversion becomes when armed force is used against the government on a significant scale. Further up again comes conventional or limited war which is held to be conflict between two or more countries limited either in terms of geography or of those weapons used. The top step is all-out war, that is to say, war which is not limited in any way and in which all weapons are used or are liable to be used.

There is of course no hard and fast rule as to the number of steps which go to make up warfare as a whole: this is purely a matter of terminology. For example, some people like to describe insurgency carried out at a high operational intensity as civil war, whereas some like to describe limited war carried out at a very low level of intensity as confrontation. There are similar opportunities for inserting an extra step between the

top end of limited war and all-out war, to cover the period in which tactical weapons are used, but not strategic ones, if such a thing is possible.

Two further points are worth noticing. First, the various steps or states of warfare do not always follow each other in ascending or descending order but overlap in terms of time and place so that it is perfectly possible to have insurgency and conventional war going along together. War may break out at any level and run up or down the scale and then reverse its direction, a fact which is well illustrated by the events which took place in Vietnam. Second, although some countries prefer to use their security services or the police, rather than the army, to counter subversion and even a low level insurgency, this does not mean that either subversion or the countering of it, is any less a manifestation of war. Subversion is a form of war and countering it, or even fostering it in a hostile foreign country, may on occasions have to be included as part of a nation's defence policy.

Even in the nuclear age all of these forms of war could occur somewhere in the world, including all-out war by conventional forces conducted over a prolonged period. But, as explained earlier, this particular form of warfare could only happen if both parties to the dispute were non-nuclear powers, neither of whom was allied to or backed by a nuclear power. From the point of view of countries in the Western world this is fortunately not possible while an effective nuclear deterrence is maintained.

In the next two chapters the business of directing operations will be looked at in the context of the main forms of warfare that must be prepared for. Of these, the first to be described will be the one least likely to occur, namely a full-scale campaign between nuclear alliances equipped with modern weapons, where the aim is clearly to prevent escalation to nuclear war whilst defending the interests of the members of the alliance. The second will be the countering of insurgency, either in the home country or in the country of an ally.

There are several other sorts of operation that might well

have to be undertaken by the armies of Western powers, as, for example, the conduct of limited war in aid of an ally in some distant part of the world, but the direction of such operations is likely to be a variation of the sort of conventional war fought between nuclear alliances if it is not a form of counter-insurgency operation. The problems of directing such operations can therefore be worked out from those described. Other types of operation that might be encountered are the fostering of insurgency in an enemy's country, or peace-keeping operations in support of the United Nations or some other international body. These, too, will not be specifically described. In the case of the first, the business is usually handled by special forces and the direction of operations is seldom left in the hands of the military authorities. In the case of the second, the way in which operations are directed presents no very special problems and has a lot in common with counter-insurgency. Although the problems of peace-keeping will be mentioned at the appropriate place, they will not be discussed in any detail.

Another field of activity that will not be covered separately, is home defence. Where a country suffers invasion, home defence has to be handled in the same way as the intense operations that will be described. Where a country is not invaded, home defence consists of mitigating the effects of such things as attack from the air, and the operations that have to be undertaken do not offer any particular problems with regard to their direction. The main problem in these cases is the co-ordination of such resources as the services and the civil authorities can scrape together, which are usually far from adequate. As with peace-keeping operations, the problem will be mentioned later, but no detailed analysis is necessary.

Notes

- 1 Field Marshal Lord Carver, *Twentieth Century Warriors*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1987.
- 2 For a wider treatment of this issue see John Keegan, *The Mask of Command*, Jonathan Cape, 1987, pp.348-50.

DIRECTING HIGH INTENSITY OPERATIONS

The image that most people have of a commander in war is probably of a man watching a battle from the vantage point of a horse or armoured vehicle, with shells bursting near by, waiting intently to give the decisive order which will clinch the victory or at worst convert a rout into an orderly withdrawal. This concept of command arises from seeing artistic works depicting such scenes as Marlborough giving orders to an aide-de-camp at the battle of Malplaquet or of Wellington with his staff at Waterloo or of Rommel lurking behind a sand dune in the desert waiting to launch his panzer units at the British. They are not in themselves wrong and they do at least draw attention to two important aspects of a commander's job, i.e. keeping in touch with events and making crucial decisions. But there are other sides to the business, most of which are not even dreamt of by those who have no professional experience.

It could be said that, in its simplest form, the exercise of operational command consists of making plans and putting them into effect, but when these two functions are broken down and analysed it can be seen that large numbers of subsidiary activities are also involved. The aim of this chapter is to give some idea of what would be involved in directing land operations in a major war between nuclear or nuclear-backed powers.

The main difficulty of doing this is that, despite forecasts made and doctrine formulated, no one really knows how future operations will develop. Piecing together the past, for all the labour, skill and judgement involved, is a more exact

science than looking into the future. None the less people must keep trying to peer through the mists which shroud the years ahead, since only by doing so can men be made ready to handle operations when the critical moment arrives.

The point has been made that nuclear weapons have altered the purpose for which wars are fought and in consequence the way in which they are likely to develop in a strategic sense. In terms of powers armed with nuclear weapons, as opposed to nuclear-backed powers, the weapons have a direct influence on the tactics employed on the battlefield, because the fact that short-range, small-yield weapons might be used at any moment, affects the amount of concentration that may safely be risked. Indeed, in the unlikely event of them actually being used for any length of time without escalation to a major strategic exchange taking place, tactics would alter to an even greater extent, with each side manoeuvring in such a way as to force their opponents into concentrations vulnerable to nuclear weapons. At the same time logistic movement and the deployment of follow-up forces would become increasingly hazardous. These considerations do not apply to nuclear-backed powers whose wars might be stopped by their sponsors' leaning on them, but whose deployment and minor tactics would not be affected by the weapons themselves.

There have been many other developments during recent years which are bound to have an almost equally fundamental influence on the way in which operations are conducted at the tactical level. As an example, two of the most striking are discussed below.

The first of these is the development of a whole range of devices that enable operations to be continued in the dark and thereby alter the pace at which they can be conducted. There is as yet insufficient data on which to assess the effect that this will have on large-scale operations. In terms of minor tactics these devices would seem to favour the defence, in that they make it very difficult for an attacker to achieve surprise by night, but taken over the whole of the battlefield they favour the stronger side because they enable operations to continue without respite

and thereby help the side that can afford to replace whole units and formations in contact with the enemy, while the troops on the weaker side have to get what rest they can while the fighting rages around them. The advent of night-fighting devices is bound to influence operations in many other ways as well as, for example, in the speed at which stocks of fuel and ammunition get used. But in no way will their influence be more important than in the wear and tear inflicted on commanders who will be deprived of the priceless lull that formerly descended on the battlefield for a few hours most nights, when staff officers were able to sort things out and commanders managed to snatch a few moments of rest.

The second important development is the steady increase that has taken place in the efficiency of defensive weapons such as anti-tank missiles and precision artillery which, despite improvements in tank protection, may well succeed, if they have not already done so, in slowing down movement on the battlefield. It is possible that developments in the field of helicopters, or of other vertical-lift aircraft, may eventually speed things up again, but it will take a long time and meanwhile it would seem that the speed of manoeuvre, though not the intensity of operations, will be reduced.

This is not to suggest that tanks are now obsolete. They still have an important part to play because of the speed at which they can move one sort of anti-tank weapon, that is to say their own gun, around the battlefield even under artillery fire. Furthermore, at the moment only tanks have a sufficiently high rate of fire and carry enough rounds to break up a concentrated attack by enemy tanks and armoured personnel carriers. All the same the steady improvement in the capability of anti-tank weapons must not be overlooked as it is certain to alter the way in which battles are conducted over the next few years.

But in the end it is not going to matter whether operations are highly mobile or relatively static, since either way, one side or the other will ultimately be pushed into a corner. Whether this is brought about by an enemy breakthrough with a consequent loss of territory, or by defenders in a relatively stable position running out of vital resources such as anti-tank

or air-defence missiles, is immaterial. The result will be the same, that is to say, cease-fire negotiations or the use of nuclear weapons. In order to provide a background against which to look at the problems of directing operations, a brief account of the way in which they might develop will be given, based on the worst case, i.e. the most difficult operation to direct, an intense and fast-moving battle. For illustrative purposes such a battle will be described in terms of the terrain found in Western Europe. Variations of terrain, as for example that of the more mountainous country found in Norway or North Italy, or of the more open spaces found in some parts of Eastern Europe, would call for a corresponding variation in tactics, but the general principle would be the same.

Although the view is widely held that North-West Germany is particularly suitable for an advance by the armoured columns of an aggressor, there are three factors which favour the defence. The first is that there are many steep, forested ranges of hills which will force the enemy to concentrate in certain areas, and although he will doubtless want to concentrate on some occasions, these defiles will at least indicate to the defenders where such concentrations are likely to take place. The second factor is that an ever-increasing proportion of the countryside is being built over. Some of these built-up areas can not be bypassed and lie across routes which the enemy must open up. They can only be cleared by infantry. A third factor is that no matter how much concentration the attacker may wish to achieve with his armoured forces, he will inevitably be restricted by the availability of suitable routes and these are limited. If he tries to cram a large number of tanks down a particular route, they will merely get spread over a great distance from front to rear. Unfortunately, this restraint will not prevent him from concentrating air support and will only partially limit concentration of artillery. All the same, the headlong advance of endless columns of tanks is not likely to happen.

Assuming that the aggressor's aim would be to gain ground and destroy the defending forces opposed to him in order to put himself in the most favourable position for cease-fire

negotiations, and bearing in mind the problems of the terrain, it can be expected that he would attack in such a way as to combine assaults designed to pin down the defender's forces and cause attrition in some areas, with concentrated thrusts designed to turn flanks and cause dislocation and paralysis in others. Such thrusts could be supported by heliborne assaults on defiles, or parachute operations farther to the rear. The defending forces would therefore not only have to hold a strong position forward, but also have the ability to retain control of the rear areas and seal off enemy thrusts that broke through the forward position.

The pattern of operations which the defence would have to take has, at first sight, much in common with traditional procedures for defending a wide frontier. For example, each of the senior forward operational commanders would have to decide where to site his main position which, while it would have to be on a suitable piece of ground as close to the border as possible, must not be so close as to be in range of the bulk of the enemy artillery. If it is, the enemy would be able to fire from fortified positions with their ammunition stacked around them and thereby start the battle with a considerable advantage. Likewise, the main position does not want to be so close to the border that enemy surface-to-air missiles operating from permanent sites beyond the border can interfere with friendly aircraft giving close air support to forces on the main position.

But the enemy cannot be allowed a free hand in the area between the border and the main position. A proportion of the defending force would therefore have to be earmarked for use as a covering force in exactly the same way as it would have been in historical times. If there had been enough warning of hostilities for the defending forces to have been adequately reinforced and deployed, the main job of the covering forces would be to cause attrition and gain early information about the strength and direction and gain early information about the strength and direction of enemy thrusts. If not, their main task would be to gain time. In either case the procedure would be roughly the same.

Temporary positions would be held by small groups of

tanks and mechanized infantry supported by self-propelled artillery which would hold up the enemy by forcing him to deploy and mount an attack. If possible the group would extricate itself before being overrun and withdraw through another delaying position and take up a further one behind it. The enemy would naturally try to avoid being held up on these weakly-held positions and would do all in their power to bypass and isolate them. After a short time the situation would become confused with small groups, sometimes no more than two or three tanks and a platoon of infantry, struggling to sell their lives as dearly as possible in the hope of buying time, or at least of disrupting the enemy's organization before he reached the area of more concentrated resistance. At this point success would depend mainly on the skill and courage of the very junior commanders and the men themselves, although the more senior commanders might get swept up in the battle and find themselves under fire. Clearly a battle of this sort could only be undertaken by armoured and mechanized units, because the proximity of the enemy's artillery would make it impossible for any other troops to conduct it successfully.

The main defence area is likely to consist of a number of positions and alternative positions spread out from front to rear over a distance of many miles. Naturally this means that there cannot be anything approaching a continuous line of defences because there would never be enough troops to man such a fortification. In any case such a layout would require a degree of concentration which would be highly dangerous should the enemy initiate the use of nuclear weapons and would in any case be far too brittle. In practice, places where likely enemy advance routes run up against ground suitable for defence would be strongly held, while less likely lines of advance would have to be covered by weaker forces capable of being reinforced by local reserves.

In a sense, the way in which the battle would be likely to develop would have a lot in common with the covering-force battle, although on a much larger scale. For example, the enemy would be trying to get through and round defended localities while the defenders would be trying to force him to deploy and

attack, so as to destroy him by direct and indirect fire. The main difference would be that the defender's positions would be much stronger and the defender would rely extensively on counter-attacks to destroy enemy that had got established on any part of a defended locality. At one end of the scale these counter-attacks could be launched by three or four tanks and a couple of sections of infantry trying to dislodge an enemy incursion into a company position. At the other end of the scale the counter-attack could be launched by a division or even a corps to strike into the flank of a major enemy incursion or to push through a weak part of his front and wreak havoc in his rear areas. In some places troops might have to move several times from one position to another before settling into the one from which they would fight, in order to take account of the way in which the battle developed.

Much of this activity could only be carried out by armoured and mechanical forces because only they would be capable of mounting the concentrated armoured attacks on which the whole defence depends. Although the ultimate purpose of a campaign may be defensive, the way in which a defensive battle is fought requires a great deal of offensive action. Troops must be capable of advancing in order to move into the path of enemy thrusts; they have to attack in order to recover important ground that has been lost; and they have to advance and attack, probably into the flank of an enemy advance, in order to throw him off balance and destroy his formations. None the less there is plenty of scope for less mobile and less well-protected units, to carry out many important tasks. For example, there are jobs for non-mechanized infantry in denying built-up areas to the enemy. There is an important role for lightly protected but highly mobile troops carried in helicopters to seize some valuable feature, for example, or to seal off an enemy break-out, but they would have to be supported by direct and indirect fire weapons which would themselves have to be fitted to the helicopters, or carried by them, if the force was to operate beyond the range of existing armour and artillery.

Undoubtedly air power would play a major part in the

outcome of such a land battle; possibly a decisive part. Land forces require a lot from the aircraft supporting them. First they need a favourable air situation, which means that as far as possible enemy aircraft are kept away. This can be done by destroying them on their airstrips or in aerial combat, but in view of the large number of aircraft that would be available to the enemy, the best that the defending air forces can expect to do is to establish local air superiority for limited periods as required by the tactical plan. For the rest, ground forces will have to look after themselves which entails providing their own air defence weapons and becoming adept at camouflage and concealment.

Next, land forces rely on air forces to provide air reconnaissance and close air support, although its provision has to be carefully balanced against the danger of losing too many aircraft. Often the most critical situations, such as those that would confront a covering force fighting desperately to gain time for the preparation of the main position, are the most dangerous for close-support aircraft because of the proximity of enemy air defences. The third and probably the most important contribution that air forces can make is interdiction, i.e. reducing the impact that the enemy's follow-up forces can have on the battle and interfering with his logistical activities. Decisions as to how best to use whatever air effort is available would obviously depend on prevailing circumstances and the very flexibility of air power means that it is well suited to exploiting successful aspects of the ground-force plan or to warding off disaster.

It is impossible adequately to summarize all that would be going on in a battle of this sort, but it is worth mentioning that commanders at every level have two immensely difficult things to do. In the first place they have to combine the activities of the many assets available to them, e.g. **armour**, infantry, artillery, air power, etc., in such a way as to make the best use of them. In the second place they have to be for ever forming a reserve so as to be able to influence events once battle is joined and then they have to form another one as soon as the

first one is committed. At every level it is a struggle to extract sufficient forces from the conflict in order to form a reserve large enough to influence events, and this applies as much to an attacking force as to a defending one. It is especially difficult to do it when being attacked by an overwhelmingly strong enemy, but the more difficult it seems, the more necessary it is.

There are important logistic implications both to the way in which available assets can be grouped and regrouped and to the forming of reserves, and they constitute one of the chief limitations on a commander's ability to act as he would like. In practice a commander must know what he can and what he cannot do for logistic reasons and he must make his arrangements in accordance with this knowledge. Although it is the business of the staff to carry out the detailed calculations and keep the commander informed of the results, the commander must always have a good general idea of the logistic situation in order to be able to think about his options. Logistic awareness is one of the main requirements for a senior commander involved in fighting a battle of this sort and the more senior he becomes the more important it is.

But the one thing in this battle that would be even more important than the commander's skill is the determination of the junior officers and soldiers in the units to keep fighting, even when exhausted, or in an apparently hopeless position. In the total confusion that would reign, it might well be the last tank or rifle section on a position which, by continuing to fire when all seems irretrievably lost, causes a final moment of delay to the enemy, thereby enabling a counter-attack to be launched successfully. In the last resort it is the endurance, courage and discipline of the men that is the most important factor: more important even than their technical ability and skill.

There has, unfortunately, been an irrational tendency in recent years to suppose that weapons technology can be used as a substitute for well-disciplined soldiers. The hope is that by concentrating so much destructive fire on the enemy, one's own troops will be saved from having to meet him face to face, either because his attack will be broken up before it reaches our

position, or because his defending infantry will be incapacitated before our attackers reach their positions. But this philosophy overlooks the qualities which units need in order to remain effective in the face of the enemy's weapons, or indeed to hold together when being bombarded on the way to the battlefield. The truth is that modern technology, even without the use of nuclear weapons, has greatly increased the already horrific face of battle and modern soldiers have to have more stamina, discipline and courage than their predecessors - not less. It is part of a commander's job to see that they have. Success will not attend the most technologically advanced army, but the army that can best harness technology to the traditional warlike attributes.

The operation described above would be the most difficult to direct because of the speed at which events would follow each other, and because of the intensity of the fighting and the high stakes involved. Many commanders at brigade and unit level would become battle casualties very quickly and those that survived would be under the greatest imaginable physical and mental strain. Only fit men in the prime of life could hope to compete. Divisional commanders might just be able to keep sufficiently clear of the hubbub to get the odd moment of rest and thus last a little longer, especially if they could occasionally hand over to a deputy. But deputy divisional commanders would soon get diverted into taking command of detachments set up to do particular jobs, or they would be sent to replace casualties elsewhere. Also, as divisions were reduced by casualties to the size of brigades, they and their commanders would get sucked ever farther forward into the battle unless replacement brigades got put under their command. The pressure on a divisional commander would be very little different from that exerted on a brigade commander. Only at the level of the corps commander and above, would the physical pressure become possible to stand for several days at a time and even then the mental strain would break all but the most robust.

But, as stated earlier, even a major attack in the central

region of Europe would not necessarily proceed at such a rate. Certainly many other sorts of operation by conventional forces can be envisaged which, while following the same general pattern would go much slower, either because the balance of offensive and defensive weapons was different, or because the terrain or climate was unsuitable for the employment of such fast-moving forces, or because the enemy did not want to risk the chaos of fast-moving operations where miscalculation could result in a premature use of a nuclear weapon. It might even be possible to become involved in an old-fashioned conventional war if, for example, a force was sent to protect a dependency or assist an ally in some remote part of the world.

It is not necessary to give accounts of the way in which all these different sorts of operations might take place because, although there are plenty more circumstances that could be studied, the variations would not greatly affect the way in which the operations have to be directed. It is therefore time to go back and look in more detail at the exercise of operational command which, as mentioned earlier, consists in essence of making plans and putting them into effect.

The purpose of operational planning is to work out how to apply available resources, within the particular circumstances existing at the time, to the achievement of a specific operational aim or mission. Before any such plan can be made, a great deal of data has to be collected about the enemy, about friendly forces and about prevailing circumstances such as the terrain, the weather and the background situation. A commander's first responsibility is therefore the collection of information.

In any sort of war a commander can get information about the enemy either from his own troops or from outside his command. In the latter case it may come **from** the reconnaissance activities of neighbouring formations or other services such as the Air Force, or it might come from the nation's intelligence resources. The important part to notice is that the getting of the required information is not only a necessary prelude to planning, but that the plans themselves must cater for getting more of it and keeping it up to date. It is of prime

importance that the commander personally should spend time thinking about the enemy's problems and about ways of getting more information about them. This task can not be left to intelligence staff officers.

It is also important that a commander should be fully conversant with the situation of his own troops. Of course he must have data regarding strengths, equipment, logistics, locations, and so on, which should not be difficult to collect except during a period of very fast-moving operations. But it is equally important for him to know precisely the frame of mind of the officers and men in the units under his command, with particular reference to his own subordinate commanders, since one of his primary functions is to see that morale is good and that it stays that way. Much of the data that a commander needs about his own force can come to him through normal communication channels but there is no alternative to his travelling around among his troops whenever there is a lull in the battle in order to discover how they are feeling. This is a time-consuming part of any commander's life and he will never make the time available to do it properly, in competition with the other things he has to do, unless he really understands the importance of it. Some commanders take a long time before they realize that it is even more important than handling their paperwork or accommodating their superiors.

Getting information about prevailing circumstances such as the terrain and climatic conditions is usually less demanding, because much of it is readily available. But there are other circumstances that are more difficult to know about. For example the commander must become personally involved when he wants to know what pressures are being brought to bear on his own superiors or colleagues, i.e. those commanding other formations in the same theatre of war. This is important information for him to have, since it may well have a bearing on his own operations. For example, these pressures might cause an alteration to be made in his own allotted task, or they could affect the time that he could keep some vital resource before it was removed to be used elsewhere. In other words, trends and events outside his own area can radically

affect a commander's operational plans and he has to keep himself very closely informed about them. Whether or not a commander has to expend much effort on getting the information he needs in this respect depends on the skill of his superior. If this man really knows his stuff, he will keep in close enough contact to feed him with what he needs to know, but if he is remote or unduly secretive, a commander will have to waste a lot of time finding things out for himself.

Having got the data he needs, or at least having got as much as he can in the time available, the commander can set about making a plan. This process can conveniently be broken down into two parts. First, he must establish the general idea or outline of what he intends to do: this is known as formulating a concept of operations. Second, he must make a detailed plan which lays down who does what and how and in what order. At the higher levels most of the planning process is carried out by staff officers, but the commander has certain important functions to fulfil and he is entirely responsible for the end-product.

Establishing a concept of operations should be a comparatively simple process. It involves relating the resources available to the task that has to be undertaken, working out two or three practicable courses of action and choosing the best. Although history likes to dwell on the brilliance of the concepts thought up by the great commanders of the past, their true claim to fame is that they were able to put them into effect. In view of the uncertainties, not to mention the chaos, that often accompany military operations, it is usually the simplest concepts that work best rather than the most brilliant.

However much help a commander gets from his staff in formulating the concept, he must at the very least spell out the purpose of the operation and choose the best of the options provided. If he is wise he will also take a close look at the options presented and probably demand that one or two others are examined before deciding which one to adopt.

One of the most common difficulties experienced in planning is defining the mission with sufficient clarity. For a

subordinate commander the aim may be clearly stated by the next man up, but at the top level this does not always happen. For example, when the force is fighting with allies the commander may be given a directive from his own government which tells him to work in close co-operation with the ally, but which then lists a number of provisos relating to over-riding national requirements, some of which may not even be disclosed to the ally. Difficulties of this sort are usually overcome to some extent, as a war develops, by the institution of an inter-allied civil-military high command such as those that ultimately became established in the two world wars, and the complex NATO chain of command which now exists is designed to enable operations to be controlled in this way from the start. None the less there are usually plenty of problems for senior operational commanders in establishing the purpose of their operations, and being clear about the mission is of the utmost importance. It not only affects planning, and without workable plans nothing can succeed, but it also affects the underlying sense of purpose of the entire force. Few people outside the military profession appreciate the difficulty that senior commanders often experience in getting clear direction. Equally, the allocation by them of clear and practicable tasks to their subordinates is one of the main tests of their military skill.

The next point to consider is the arrangement that will have to be made in order to get hold of resources, with particular reference to timing, and in this context resources includes men, weapons, ammunition, armoured vehicles, communications equipment, transport and supplies, to mention only a few. Obtaining and allocating resources are two of the prime functions of a country's defence ministry and of theatre commanders, i.e. supreme commanders and commanders-in-chief. The availability of resources is also an important factor in the life of operational commanders when they are working out how best to achieve their aim. In theory an operational commander need do no more than take what he is given and get on with it, but in practice he must be forever explaining why he needs more of this or that in order to give himself a better chance of success: if he fails to do so he will see things that he

urgently needs disappearing elsewhere. In the past many well-known commanders owed much of their success to their skill in getting hold of what they needed at exactly the right moment.

Certainly, the getting hold of resources must be closely related to timing. For example, it may be advantageous to delay an operation in order to get extra resources, but not if it gives the enemy time to improve his position to a greater extent, either by getting more resources himself or in some other way. Timing is also relevant to other considerations, for example it might be fatal to wait for extra resources if surprise or favourable weather were missed as a result.

The last and major part of the planning process involves working out how the resources which he has managed to obtain should be combined on the battlefield to achieve the aim, and in this context the word resources not only applies to weapons and equipment but also to the units that use them. For this purpose the planning process has to cover many activities such as the allocation of territory and boundaries to formations and units and the movement plans and the arrangements for communications, to mention but a few. For a commander to exercise a proper influence on all this detailed planning he must know the characteristics of the main weapons and equipment in use and the extent to which the men are capable of getting the best out of them. Not to have this knowledge slows down a commander's capacity for making decisions and results in much extra work as staffs get asked to examine options that are plainly impracticable.

In theory, despite the amount of work involved, planning is a straightforward business. In practice it is seldom simple, since resources, or more likely the lack of them, when considered in relation to circumstances such as terrain, weather and the opposing forces, usually make it seem extremely difficult to hit on a plan that will achieve the aim. If the operation is large and complicated, such as the allied invasion of occupied Europe in 1944, the planning process may go back and forth for months, or even years, with adjustments being made to the resources available and possibly even to the

original purpose or aim, especially if this contained a time element which could be changed without nullifying the whole reason for carrying out the operation. At lower levels, e.g. brigade and division, plans have to be made much faster, but adjustment between one level and the next regarding resources and timing still has to go on.

The making of a plan by a commander must by its very nature be a pragmatic activity. Most armies today teach their officers a logical process for making their plans, but this is no more than a matter of procedure. What counts is the commander's ability to get hold of as many of the facts relating to the situation as possible and make the right deductions from them. In doing this his experience is of more importance than his knowledge of the planning procedure.

Once a plan has been made there are two things which have to be done before it can be put into effect. First, it must be put across to the people who will have to implement it and second, these people must be made ready for their task. Operational commanders have to play a leading role in both these functions.

It is the function of staff officers to turn the plan into orders which are passed down to the next formation or unit. Such orders are likely to be detailed and highly classified from a security point of view to prevent them being discovered by the enemy. But the commander himself should personally ensure that his immediate subordinates understand his concept of operations and his ideas about how they are likely to develop in a general sense, beyond the time frame of the specific orders that they receive. His subordinates need to know this so that when unforeseen events take place, as they surely will, they will have a basis for making decisions which will as far as possible be in accordance with their commander's long-term intentions.

In addition to his immediate subordinates, a commander may well wish to give an outline of his intentions to a proportion of his more junior commanders and men. This not only enlightens them to some extent, but also gives a much larger number of his troops the opportunity to see him and hear him at first hand.

Preparing the force to put the plan into effect can include bringing units up to strength with reinforcements; it can include conducting rehearsals or exercises to practise particular parts of the plan; and it can involve providing an opportunity for more general training to ensure that fitness and skills are as good as they can be under the circumstances. Furthermore, although in most armies units are trained in accordance with an agreed army doctrine, this has to be refined in each theatre of war to take account of the particular circumstances prevailing there. Operational commanders have, therefore, to decide what additional methods and procedures their troops must adopt in addition to those that they have been accustomed to, and they must give them the opportunity for practising them before committing them to operations. In practice the opportunity to do as much as is desirable in all these fields is seldom available, but it is equally unusual to find that the units provided are ready for instant use.

From the point of view of the troops on the ground, understanding what is required of them and the knowledge that they are in every way prepared to undertake their allotted role are two of the vital ingredients of high morale. Nothing is more important to the success of an undertaking than that the men concerned go into the venture in the best possible frame of mind, because they are the people who have to use the resources to fight the enemy and without them the best commanders and the best staff officers will be useless. For this reason commanders at every level will want to become personally involved in overseeing the business of preparation.

It can be seen that a commander has a lot to do with regard to making his plan and ensuring that his forces are, as far as possible, ready to implement it. It is now time to see what he has to do in order to control operations once they have started, which is the acid test of his ability.

Broadly speaking, a commander has to hold a balance. On the one hand he has got to force his plan through in the face of the many difficulties that are sure to arise. If he starts with a good plan and adequate reserves, he should be able to exploit

opportunities or ward off the adverse effects of enemy action without changing it. In this case his task is to commit any forces that he has kept as reserves under his own hand at the right moment and in the right direction, and at the same time to reconstitute new reserves in order to be ready for further developments. But it sometimes happens that these developments indicate that a major change of plan is required. Almost always an operational commander comes under pressure to make such a change when things do not seem to be going well: this pressure may be exerted from above, or from his subordinates, or from his staff. He then has to decide whether to stick to his guns and force the enemy to fall in with his original idea, or whether to adopt a more flexible approach in order to achieve his aim by a different route. If the situation is such that there is absolutely no hope of getting his plan to work, it is obviously right to change it, but the danger is that in doing so he will unsettle his own side and at the end of the day succeed only in providing a new plan that is no more successful than the first.

This dilemma can only be dealt with by a commander who has a combination of great strength of will with sound judgement. He not only has to overcome the enemy but he also has to carry his own side with him, which involves reassuring those above him as well as compelling reluctant subordinates to do what he wants. There is no room for compromise between what he wants and what others want. He must either push through his own plan or make another which then becomes his plan and which he must push through with all the strength and ferocity at his disposal.

Although most armies have a tradition of obedience, which helps an operational commander in this respect, his subordinates may themselves be under such intense pressure that they will only do exactly what they are told, if he is absolutely clear and determined. If he is not, he will leave a loophole in his instructions to avoid a head-on collision with a subordinate who may then avail himself of it, at the same time persuading himself that he is being both loyal and obedient. In short, although a commander should not be rigid with his subor-

ordinates, he must insist that they carry out the task he gives them within such limitations as he wishes to impose upon them. The uncompromising and forceful nature of these arrangements is essential because of the totally extraordinary and compelling circumstances of military operations, which are completely unlike any other activity known to man. This results from the combination of imminent danger, fatigue, distraction, uncertainty, and the magnitude of the stakes, to name but a few of the influences involved.

A commander who wants to achieve his aim in the face of the enemy, not only must show perseverance and determination to a high degree, he must also keep himself one jump ahead of the enemy if he can. In other words, he has to maintain the irritative, because if he does not make the enemy react to his plans, he will soon find himself obliged to react to those of the enemy. This requires foresight and energy since it means that he cannot afford to concentrate only on current events no matter how pressing they seem, but he **must** always be planning for the future.

A commander must also keep an eye on his own superiors to ensure that they do not throw his arrangements out of gear. Unless he is capable of explaining to them exactly what he is doing and why and of persuading them that his operations are on course for success, if permitted to proceed without hindrance, he may find that some of his resources are removed for use elsewhere, or that his mission is changed, or that he is hampered in some other way: he may even be replaced.

In order to be in a position to put his case in the most favourable way, he must understand what is causing the pressure from above. If he is the senior operational **commander** it is likely to be the result of political unease about the course of events and he must also consider what he can do to alleviate this. Good public relations is important in this respect and it is up to commanders to ensure that representatives of the press and television are kept fully informed of the favourable aspects of the situation, so that they in turn can reassure the civil population whose attitude affects the politicians. **Sometimes** the pressures inflicted on a commander by those who might be

expected to support him are more distracting and difficult to bear than the action of the enemy, a state of affairs that would have been well understood by Montgomery in the Normandy bridgehead for example. In almost every case the ultimate reason for this is that the true situation is not properly understood on the home front.

None of this should be taken as implying that senior operational commanders should ever defy the lawful instructions of their superiors. If, having presented their views as forcibly as they consider necessary, they receive orders that do not suit them, they must implement them fully to the best of their ability. They can hardly expect obedience from their subordinate commanders if they do otherwise.

It would perhaps be satisfactory if the sequence here described of planning an operation, followed by preparing for it and then carrying it out, could all be completed before the start of a similar cycle for the next operation. But this could only happen in a very short war consisting of one operation. In practice, planning for the next operation, and probably for the one after that, has to go on while the first one is under way. Furthermore, the commander has got to fit in all the other activities described above, such as keeping in touch with his subordinates and troops and handling the public relations at the same time. Inevitably a commander has far more things to do than he could possibly fit into the time available and he must do them without denying himself the opportunity to sit down, as quietly and often as circumstances will allow, to think out his problems.

All of this might just be handled by a really effective organizer, including the provision of thinking time, were it not for the overwhelming pressure of dealing with the current operation: it is extremely difficult for a commander to detach himself sufficiently from the immediate impact of events, especially if their outcome will affect the later operations that he is working on. It should also be remembered that the distractions of conflict may not be limited to calls on the commander's attention: they may also include causing him to move hurriedly, or they may result in the sudden loss of light

or communications, or even the destruction of the edifice within which he is trying to do his business.

Of course, the extent to which the pressure of current operations impinges on the activities of a commander depends to some extent on the size of the force concerned. For example, if the total force is a small one consisting of two or three brigades acting together, the force commander will be more closely involved in the fighting than the commander of an army group consisting of a number of corps, each composed of several divisions of several brigades, although the commander of the larger force will have more complex problems in other respects.

Another consideration that has to be borne in mind, is that only the commander who is in place at the start of a campaign begins at the beginning of the operational cycle. Most take over their jobs at a time when planning for the next operation has already started and they may even have to pick up the reins in the middle of a period of fighting. This happens because change of command often results from the previous occupant of the job being incapacitated, sacked or promoted into an unexpected vacancy, at a critical moment.

Clearly it would be impossible for one man unaided to carry out all the tasks associated with the command of a large number of soldiers in war. Even with the assistance of capable staff officers, a commander has to organize his day-to-day activities with the greatest care. It is therefore necessary to examine in outline the way in which a commander should manage his day-to-day business.

At the three lowest command levels, i.e. those of the infantry section, platoon and company, or the equivalent in other arms, the commander has to make his plan and get his men to put it into effect all by himself. As a rule the planning process is relatively simple and the data needed is limited. But the simplicity of the planning is offset by the fact that these low-level commanders often have to make their plans in a hurry under highly dangerous and distracting conditions. They are, in fact, the people on whose skill, courage and

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strength of leadership the outcome of the battle will ultimately depend.

Above company level the operational commander is assisted in carrying out his task by staff officers. Although a battalion commander has only a very small staff, e.g. an operations officer, an adjutant and an intelligence officer, a brigade commander has a considerably larger staff, with even larger staffs to help divisional commanders, corps commanders and army or army group commanders.

So far as planning is concerned it is the job of the staff to assemble the data and present it in such a way as to provide the commander with a number of options: in the course of this process they can insert the fruits of their own military experience. But it is for the commander to judge whether the options are practicable and which one to select. Indeed he may decide not to select any of them and direct instead that some other option be studied. In any case the whole process is his responsibility and he must provide the impetus for it by directing the staff to initiate the plans which he needs and by ensuring that they update plans which he sees need updating.

When it comes to execution, it is the staff who prepare orders in accordance with the plan that has been worked out and it is their function to distribute these orders, although, as mentioned earlier, the commander may want to put the important parts across to his subordinate commanders verbally first. The commander will, whenever possible, want to keep in close touch with his subordinates while events are developing, in order to encourage or drive them; to get a feel for what is going on, which is another way of saying to extend and update his planning data; and to adjust his plan from time to time if necessary. Finally, the commander has to ensure that his men are fit, as well trained and equipped as the circumstances permit and in a good frame of mind.

Commanders develop their own techniques for carrying out their tasks to suit their temperaments. Broadly speaking, in quiet periods when planning is the main preoccupation they tend to spend more time in their headquarters making visits

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forward to see and be seen by their men and to assess their state of fitness, training and morale. Once action is joined they often try to place themselves with or near whichever subordinate headquarters is under greatest pressure so as to get the best feel for the battle and to be ready to influence events as quickly as possible should new orders have to be given. Naturally, when they leave their headquarters they have to be accompanied by a sufficient number of staff officers and communication facilities to enable them to keep in touch with events in other parts of the command area. There are other places a commander must visit from time to time, such as the headquarters of neighbouring commanders or even of his own superior, especially if this person is dilatory about going forward to see his subordinates, and on these occasions arrangements also have to be made so that he can keep in touch with events in his own area.

These considerations apply to commanders at every level, from the brigade commander upwards, and the main difference in the nature of their jobs relates to the time-scale covered by their planning. For example, the brigade commander is usually concerned with planning for events that are likely to take place during the coming twenty-four hours, the divisional commander is looking from one to two days ahead and so on up the command chain.

A commander's routine is affected partly by this factor and partly by the size of his main headquarters which becomes larger and more cumbersome as the size of the force increases. The more difficult the headquarters is to move, the less likely it is that the commander will be with it and the more likely he is to be with a small group of staff officers and communications facilities known as a tactical headquarters.

In all forms of warfare a commander relies heavily on his staff and in some armies in the past, there were occasions when the staff carried out most of the functions now considered to belong to the commander. It could almost be said that the very idea of a staff, as we now understand the term, was developed by the Prussians during the Napoleonic wars, partly to ensure a degree of standardized professional direction of their armies which, for traditional reasons, had to be commanded by royal

personages.* This system survived in the German Army as late as the First World War; two of the main army groups on the Western front being commanded by the Crown Prince and by Prince Rupert of Bavaria. There have been instances in other countries of the staff taking over most of the functions of a commander, but this has usually happened because the commander concerned was ill, or feeble from old age, or was plainly incompetent for some other reason.

But it is highly unsatisfactory for a commander to allow himself to become a puppet of his staff for many reasons. First, staff officers do not get that part of the data which the commander gets from moving around and this is particularly relevant in so far as it concerns the state of the force itself, although it also concerns what the commander sees and hears about the enemy's situation. When it comes to putting plans into effect, it is even less satisfactory for the commander to leave too much to his staff as the whole drive and impetus of his plan will be lost and reaction to events slowed down. In practice, although both the commander and the staff have an essential role to play, success comes from the commander using his staff properly and not acting in such a way that his function is carried out by the staff.

It is difficult to summarize what is involved in the command of operations because it varies so greatly between one operation and the next. In this chapter an attempt has been made to isolate some of the more important functions and to discuss them, but it would be foolish to suppose that this brief summary covers all aspects of the business. If there is one characteristic of the job that stands out above all others, it is the vast variety of the calls that are made on a commander's time, all of which have to be seen against the unique circumstances in which commanders have to operate.

Note

I For an account of the development of the staff in Prussia see Walter Gorlitz, *The German General Staff*, Chap. 2.

DIRECTING LOW INTENSITY OPERATIONS

Insurrection has accounted for a considerable proportion of the wars fought by man and the advent of nuclear weapons has done nothing to reduce the incidence of it. On the contrary, the limitation which the existence of nuclear weapons imposes on open war between states has tended to increase it. Insurgency of a sort could break out in almost any country and countering it is by far the most likely type of operation for a soldier to have to undertake, either in his own country or helping an ally abroad.

The purpose of this chapter is to show what is involved in directing operations against insurgents as opposed to coping with an attack by a foreign power. Fortunately the stakes are lower, in that wars of this sort are not fought under the shadow of an imminent use of nuclear weapons, but they can be expensive in terms of life and money, they can drag on for years and they can, under certain circumstances, lead to intervention from an outside country which could carry with it a threat of escalation towards nuclear war. Above all, the suspicion and hatred that insurgency engenders, inevitably brings misery to the population of the country concerned.

From the point of view of directing operations, there is one major difference between countering insurgency and taking part in an international war that needs to be understood from the start.

In wars between countries or alliances, military operations are conducted to achieve political ends. For example, in the case of a war in Western Europe as described in the last

chapter, they would, from the West's point of view, be designed to safeguard the territory of the NATO countries and to prevent nuclear devastation. In international wars, military leaders are therefore given a clear mission by the politicians who will want to know in some detail how they plan to conduct their operations. The politicians will also keep a close watch on how the operations develop and may require alterations to the plan from time to time, to take account of new conditions. They are likely to become more and more involved as the decision to use a nuclear weapon or call for a cease-fire comes closer. But their intervention has of necessity to be made through the military chain of command from the top. They cannot sensibly involve themselves directly with commanders in the field.

Because of the nature of countering insurgency, a division of responsibility between politicians and soldiers on these lines cannot work, although people endlessly try to make it do so. The reason why it does not work is because insurgency is not primarily a military activity. Although insurgents include the use of force in their programme, they are unlikely to be relying on it to do more than supplement a wider programme consisting of political, economic and psychological measures. Only if they have been successful in building up a large and well-equipped army of their own, with which they can challenge the forces of the government in the field, is the use of force going to become the mainstay of their campaign. For this reason insurgency can only be successfully countered by a government programme in which the activities of the country's security forces are closely tied into an overall campaign consisting of political, economic and psychological measures. For this to happen, security-force commanders from the top to the bottom must work closely together with national and local politicians and officials to implement the programme. It is quite useless trying to co-ordinate a campaign at national level and then send instructions through different ministries to their representatives throughout the country and hope that a properly co-ordinated campaign will happen at local level. This factor

makes for a relationship between soldiers and politicians which is completely different from that considered in the last chapter; it also means that operations have to be directed in a totally different way.

A problem that arises in the writing of this chapter is that there is no worst case insurgency that can be described and which encapsulates the business of directing operations to the extent that all other cases can be related to it, since every single insurgency is different. The approach adopted in the last chapter will not therefore work. Instead it will be necessary to discuss the principles of countering insurgency in order to provide a background against which the way in which military commanders should play their part in directing operations can be studied.

Broadly speaking, there are two parts to any campaign of insurgency. First, there is the action which the insurgents take to influence people into supporting them and, second, there is the action which they and their supporters take against the government. Both parts go along together, overlap and are not easily distinguishable to the outside world. In both areas the methods which the insurgents use are bound to depend on the particular circumstances, but are likely to consist of a mixture of persuasion and coercion. From the insurgents' point of view, success depends on getting the correct balance between violence on the one hand and political, psychological and economic pressures on the other. In order to execute such a co-ordinated programme, insurgents have to have an organization, which they can get either by infiltrating one that already exists such as a political party, or by setting up a new one.

The aim of the government when trying to counter such a campaign is to regain and retain the allegiance of its people. Its methods for doing this must also depend on the circumstances, for example, the terrain, the sort of society that exists, and the degree of support which the insurgents are getting from outside the country, if any. As mentioned, the **government**, like the insurgents, has to combine political,

economic and psychological pressures with the operations of the security forces. It cannot be said too often that countering insurgency involves a wide range of government activity, and operations by the security forces only help matters if they are conducted within an overall framework that ties the whole programme together.

The nature of a military commander's job in counter-insurgency operations depends very much on two things. First on how the insurgency arose and second on how long it has been going on when the commander concerned arrives.

Insurgencies arise in many different ways. Sometimes they develop out of subversive activities, that is to say out of illegal, but non-violent, acts conducted by a group of people who want to overthrow the government, or force it to do something that it does not want to do. Subversion itself may arise from the exploitation of perfectly legal protest. Insurgencies that come about in this way usually start, therefore, against a background of riots and disturbances and military intervention takes place as events get beyond the power of the police to control.

But insurgency could take place as a result of being deliberately fostered from outside by a hostile power working on discontented elements of the population. In this case the insurgents would probably spend months or years building up the strength of their supporters before making any attempt to attack the forces of the government. Indeed they might content themselves with building up a potential to attack and then keeping it in abeyance, to use in conjunction with conventional operations at a later date. In the first case the army would probably not become involved until it was itself attacked by the insurgents or until the level of attacks on the population or government assets got beyond the power of the police to handle. In the second case the army would become involved from the start because the insurgents would be interfering with the mobilizing and deploying of its forces for the conventional war.

In every case the critical period comes at the start because that is when the framework within which military, police and

civil measures can operate effectively is being set up. As national and local politicians and policemen are not trained in the handling of such a warlike activity as countering insurgency, it is up to the senior military commander at the time to devise it. But he can only advise the government because most of the decisions needed to set up the framework have to be made and implemented by the politicians. While the necessary action is being considered, there will be a period of chaos during which the military and the police between them have to improvise as best they can in an attempt to contain the outward manifestations of the insurgency, such as riots, assassinations and sabotage, using means which are within the ordinary peacetime laws of the country. This period can be likened to the action of the covering force trying to buy time for the occupation of the main position. It provides an exhausting and exacting test of a commander's ability.

No time should be lost in producing a situation in which a successful campaign can take place, which is just another way of describing the setting-up of a good framework. As with picture frames, a frame within which counter-insurgency operations can take place should consist of four parts corresponding to the top, the bottom and the two sides.

The first part of the frame must be the co-ordinating machinery, which is needed to ensure that the various aspects of the campaign can be tied together in such a way that methods of one sort do not interfere with methods of another, and in this connection it is most important that the co-ordination should be effective at every level. This involves setting up a series of committees, attended by the heads of the different organizations at each level, to co-ordinate all action. The committees must obviously include the head soldier and policeman for the area, but they must also include representatives of the main civil activities as well. These committees have to be backed by an effective executive organization which must include an operations room with access to the intelligence and public-relations staffs, so that the committees can come to the right decisions and promulgate them.

It is by no means easy to set up adequate co-ordinating

machinery, because even if an effective system can be devised, it can only be made to work if people are prepared to pay the price for it in political, personal and financial terms. A political price has to be paid, for example, whenever a locally-elected body has to give up some of its authority to the central government or to a civilian or military representative of it. The price is economic whenever boundaries change or new offices are set up, with all that this implies in terms of accommodation and communications. The price is personal when one man has his little bit of power or freedom curtailed to fit in with other people. In the early days of a campaign those in authority hope that the situation will not become sufficiently serious to warrant payments of this kind. Later on they may feel that the end is in sight and delay paying up for that reason. It is never easy to get the price paid, but it is an essential part of the military commander's job to persuade his colleagues that it is necessary for them to do so.

The second part of the framework consists of the action needed to persuade the people of the country to reject the unconstitutional activities of the insurgents. For this to happen all those concerned with planning and executing any part of the government's programme must constantly bear in mind the effects which their plans, actions and words are likely to have on public opinion. A system is needed for ensuring that this factor is considered during the deliberations of the various committees responsible for directing the government's measures. In addition, an information service, that is capable of monitoring enemy propaganda and preparing and disseminating material to counter it and of getting across the government's views, must be set up. Again, although it is not difficult to devise such a system, there is a price to be paid for setting it up, particularly in political terms, because the operation of an information service of the power required represents an erosion of basic freedom and if misused by the government could in the long-term represent a danger as great as that of the insurgents themselves.

The third part of the frame is to establish a strong intelligence organization, to provide the government with the

information it needs to work out policy and to provide the security forces with the information which they need in order to conduct operations. The difficulty is that in normal times the requirement is best met by a small, secure and highly centralized system working direct to the top level of government, whereas, when an insurgency organization has been built up, a larger, decentralized system capable of providing background information to commanders at every level is required. Once again there is a political price for doing this because, in effect, the dissemination of information results in the dissemination of power also. Furthermore, there is also a considerable security risk inherent in enlarging the intelligence organization in this way. Even if the will exists to overcome these obstacles, it is still difficult to implement an expansion of the intelligence service fast enough to keep up with the speed at which the insurgents are expanding their organization. It is one of the most important jobs of a military commander to hammer away at the government in order to ensure that the opposition that is bound to be raised is overcome. If he fails to do so, a great deal of the work that the security forces undertake will be wasted. Furthermore, operations mounted on bad information often do no more than provide material for enemy propaganda.

The fourth part of the framework concerns the law. No country which relies on the law of the land to regulate the lives of its citizens can afford to see that law flouted by its own government, even in an insurgency situation, so everything done by a government and its agents must be legal. But this does not mean that the government must work within the same set of laws during an insurgency as existed beforehand, because it is a function of government to make new laws when necessary. Nor does it mean that the law must be administered in the same way during an uprising as it is in more peaceful times, because the government also has the power to modify the way in which the law is administered if necessary, subject to various constitutional restraints. It is therefore both legal and normal for governments to introduce emergency regulations, as an insurrection develops, to enable

the security forces to take what action is necessary and to enable the legal services to continue to function despite such interference from the insurgents as intimidation of juries. Naturally altering laws and the ways in which they are administered has to be done with great care, particularly with regard to the effect which it has on public opinion at home and abroad, so as to avoid a swing in favour of the enemy. The same considerations apply to implementing action that may already be within the existing law, but which is being avoided because of the adverse effects that its use might have on public opinion.

In this context it often seems that public opinion will only accept a level of force being used against insurgents if it is related to the amount of force that the insurgents themselves are using. Thus the more the insurgents use violence, the more Draconian can the emergency regulations become and vice versa. This is illogical, because anyone who is prepared to use illegal force against his own country has no right to expect anything other than total extermination, as fast as possible, by any legal means, regardless of how much force he is using. But after so extended a period of comparative peace, people in the West at least, have become soft and gullible, which is one of the reasons why insurgency campaigns last so long. It now seems politically impossible for sufficiently strong government measures to be taken against insurgents for any length of time, before being assailed by popular outcry at home or abroad. The answer to this problem is not to ignore the protest, but to attack the sources of adverse opinion using the government's public-relations machine together with such legal sanctions as may be available, since the outcry is not usually a spontaneous reaction originating from the public, but is carefully orchestrated by sympathizers of the insurgents. Again, it is very much up to the military commander to point out what is happening and to suggest how it should be dealt with. Civil authorities who may not have had past experience of the way in which subversive people manipulate public opinion are all too likely to take it as genuine, rather than as deliberately orchestrated enemy action.

One last point regarding the framework is that each part of it depends to some extent on the other parts and has to be changed as the campaign develops to take account of changing circumstances. The business of building up and manipulating the framework is one of the most complicated aspects of defeating insurgents and requires continuous prompting by the military commander, even though most of the decisions have to be made by the politicians. Thus, even those military commanders who take over after the original framework has been set up will be concerned with ensuring that it is improved and amended as circumstances change.

Although the absolute necessity for establishing an effective framework is obvious, it seldom gets set up, because the price is more than most politicians can stomach. This is particularly the case when the insurgency only affects an overseas dependency or a small part of the country. As a result, governments tend to compromise over the framework, which means that they become involved in a long-term war of attrition. The danger of doing this is first that a semi-dormant situation may burst into flames at an inconvenient moment and, second, that such operations as do take place, are likely to be ineffective and frustrating for military commanders and their men, to say nothing of those members of the population in the affected area that remain loyal to the government.

It can be seen that the commander who finds himself in place at the start of an insurgency campaign is going to have considerable difficulty trying to design a framework for future operations while at the same time holding the fort in the face of the insurgents' initial onslaught. But there is a third thing which he must also do, which is to start thinking about the long-term operations which the army and the police will have to undertake. These operations can conveniently be divided into two main types. First, there are defensive operations which are those designed to prevent the insurgents from achieving their aims. Second, there are offensive operations designed to root out the insurgents themselves. Politicians normally favour defensive operations because on the one

hand they are sensitive to enemy successes, while on the other they wish to avoid the propaganda which they expect to be aimed at them if they use their security forces offensively. Certainly if too little emphasis is placed on defensive operations, the enemy is able to get cheap success which enhances his reputation. At the same time if too little emphasis is placed on offensive operations, the insurgent organization is able to expand easily, which means that more and more resources have to be expended by the government on defensive tasks, merely to maintain its position.

The sort of tasks which fall under the heading of defensive operations include the guarding of factories, docks, commercial centres, security-force bases and people who are at particular risk, such as politicians and judges. Defensive operations also include the protection of legal marches and rallies and the dispersal of illegal ones and riots. In rural areas they could also include the protection of crops. Taking the business one stage further, defensive operations can also include the forging of links with the population, which is often described as community relations and even methods of population control fall under this heading. The common factor in all these different operations is that they are designed to prevent the enemy from doing something.

Defensive operations, especially those involved in handling riots, can be very energetic for commanders as well as for the men. If rioting is widespread over a large area such as a big city, many military and police units will be needed to contain it and a fast-moving engagement lasting for many days may result. The handling of such an engagement will involve committing units to oppose mobs at various places throughout the city, while holding others in reserve with the transport required to get them to where they may be needed at short notice. As soon as one reserve is committed another has to be formed so as to be ready to go where it may be needed later. While all this is going on, engineer units have to be held at strategic points with the necessary plant in order to keep selected routes open for the deployment of reserves and for the movement of casualties, fire-fighting detachments, or bomb-disposal teams.

Despite many protestations to the contrary, there is no such thing as a spontaneous riot, although occasionally one set of people may organize a protest march and a different lot may turn it into a riot. In any case the organizers are likely to have a very clear idea of what they wish to achieve, which may well include undermining the position of the government by showing that it is not able to maintain law and order without making concessions to whoever it is that is organizing the trouble. The immediate objective of each riot is therefore to show that government forces are unable to contain it, even if only for a short time. If government forces are clearly able to contain it, the riot will probably die down and reconvene later. It is for this reason that the security forces must never run out of reserves, since as soon as they do so the rioters can get into an unaffected area and take such action as will demonstrate that the government is powerless.

While rioting is going on, commanders at quite high levels are going to have to keep in close touch with events, in order to be in a position to find additional forces to send to hard-pressed subordinates. This commitment will inevitably interfere with many more important, but less pressing, tasks and it is a test of a commander's ability to be able to keep the two in balance.

Offensive action which is aimed at identifying and destroying the insurgents is mainly concerned with obtaining information and deploying resources to take advantage of it. In order to do this an operational commander has to use his forces to build up a picture by patrolling and observing. He can then add information discovered in this way to that provided by the intelligence organization and use it for offensive purposes, when he has enough to make success probable. If he takes offensive action without adequate information he will not only fail in his aim but will, in all probability, cause unnecessary annoyance to the population, thereby risking a loss of support to the government.

The job of the senior commander in this process is to select the right size of the force to cover a particular area and then to ensure that its commander is left in peace for long enough to

build up his operations, because the process takes weeks or months to come to fruition and every time the local commander is changed, or the troops moved, the process has to start again from the beginning. The fact that both commanders and troops may be diverted from their offensive role by the need to carry out defensive operations in the same area, does not greatly matter, because they often pick up useful information relevant to the offensive task while carrying out defensive ones. But achieving the necessary stability is extremely difficult because there always appear to be so many good reasons for moving people around. Many of these reasons are administrative, such as the apparent necessity for rotating units in and out of the area of operations, or for replacing key individuals.

Sometimes the pressure takes the form of a desire to concentrate forces in a bad area in the hope of improving the situation there, although if it means replacing a commander who is working up the area, the reverse is likely to happen. Sometimes the pressure comes from apparently uncommitted members of the community who suggest that a particularly successful commander is being abrasive and destroying hopes of a better relationship with the people: such an approach is likely to be instigated by the insurgents. Resisting these pressures is one of the most difficult tasks facing commanders in countering insurgency and can only be accomplished by officers who really understand the job. It is virtually impossible to be a successful senior commander in this field without having really studied the way in which the junior commanders have to work.

Special forces, i.e. those that are equipped, trained or recruited to carry out a special role, are often particularly suitable for carrying out offensive operations. It is essential that their activities, when used, be fully co-ordinated with other security-force operations and also that they should operate within the law because the government must be able to take responsibility for what they do. As an insurgency de-escalates from heavy rioting and a high level of violence, it is often helpful to pass as much of the offensive operations as

possible to special forces as their activities tend to be less obvious and provide less opportunities for enemy propaganda. Commanders must therefore understand how special forces can be used and work them into their plans accordingly.

From the foregoing it can be seen that the way in which a counter-insurgency campaign develops depends very much on the skill of those occupying the senior military command positions at the start, because the arrangements which they succeed in getting established will, to a large extent, determine the course of the campaign. But their successors are responsible for putting faults right and making adjustments in accordance with changing circumstances. The influence of senior commanders on a counter-insurgency campaign is therefore no less than it is in other sorts of war.

There are several different ways in which an army could be called upon to help a friendly government engaged in a counter-insurgency campaign. For example, it could merely be asked to give advice about how the campaign should be developed, or it might be persuaded to supply detachments of special troops to train local security forces or even to take part in covert operations. Alternatively, it might be called upon to go farther and provide a large force to carry a major share in countering the insurgency as the American army did in Vietnam.

In each case the first thing to establish is the way in which the guest force will work with the host government and its forces. The next thing is to ensure that the host government has set up a proper framework to cover the co-ordination of its programme, the provision of intelligence and a proper public relations organization, and above all, that there is a legal structure that is compatible with the way in which the visitors are prepared to work. It is particularly important that the visiting force is allowed to become fully integrated into the host country's intelligence organization, since, if it is not, it can be fed selective intelligence and thereby manipulated so that it carries out operations that may not be in its interests. In

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the unlikely event of all these stipulations being met, the visiting force can fit into the host country's counter-insurgency effort and operate accordingly. But if they are not met, the commander of the visiting force will have to spend a great deal of time, in conjunction with his country's ambassador, ensuring that suitable arrangements evolve.

An important thing for the commander of a visiting force to bear in mind is that the internal arrangements of the host country may be very different from anything that he has been accustomed to finding elsewhere, and that the only thing that matters is that he fits in with what he does find as opposed to what he might wish to find. This is particularly the case if he is in command of a force that has gone to the assistance of a country in the Third World. It may be that all his previous experience has been related to working in an advanced democratic country with locally-elected councils in addition to a democratically-elected central government. If he then finds himself in a one-party state run entirely by officials at the local level, all his past experience will be irrelevant. Clearly he must work out a system for prosecuting the war that is suited to the circumstances of the country concerned and he must avoid trying to bend the circumstances to fit his past experience. In fact a Third World country of the type described would probably pose fewer problems, at any rate in so far as setting up the framework was concerned, than an advanced European democracy.

When it comes to considering how a senior operational commander should set about exercising his function in a counter-insurgency situation, it is at once apparent that much of what he has to do is directly comparable to the sort of action he has to take in other forms of warfare. For example, he has to start by getting information, he has to formulate a concept, get a plan made and ensure that it is properly put into effect. The main difference is that the operational plan has to be much more closely tied in with the other parts of the government's programme and so the commander's day-to-day routine is bound to be greatly concerned with the links which he has to

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maintain outside his own force. It would not, for example, be possible for a senior commander in a counter-insurgency situation to set himself up in a tactical headquarters and divide his time between thinking out his problem and visiting his troops.

But even so the commander still has the dual function of planning and execution, so he still has to spend some time in his headquarters and some time away from it. But the battlefield is not a physical one to the same extent: it lies largely in the minds of the people. In his travels to collect data, the commander has to spend less time looking through his binoculars to see what is going on and more time talking to people such as policemen, local government officials, and influential members of the community, including religious leaders, teachers, and so on.

This greatly affects the way in which the force should be structured. Whereas in conventional war the grouping of units into brigades and brigades into divisions and divisions into corps can be arranged to suit the tactical military requirement; in an insurgency situation command levels have to be adjusted to fit the way in which the civil government is laid out. Thus in a country such as the United Kingdom where the civil government is based on regions, counties, districts and parishes, the military chain of command would have to be based on a regional military commander, a county military commander, a district military commander, etc. If possible these commanders should locate their headquarters with either the civic, or more probably the police, headquarters for the area concerned, which greatly facilitates the process of co-ordinating the activities of the security forces with those of the civil authorities, an essential requirement for a successful campaign. If the situation is such that existing military formations exactly fit the civil layout so that a division or district headquarters can cover a region and a brigade a county, for example, so much the better. If not, then the military chain of command has to be adapted to fit it. If the campaign is taking place overseas where the civil government operates on different lines, such as provinces, districts and sub-districts, then

the military chain of command has to be tailored to fit that situation.

None of this affects the relationship which should exist between a **commander** and his staff: the need for the two to keep closely in touch with each other when the commander is absent from his headquarters. Mechanically the problems may be different from those of the conventional battlefield because of the distances involved or the means of communication available, or the timescale on which planning is based, but the responsibilities remain the same. In an insurgency campaign, the more senior commanders are likely to spend even less time in their headquarters than they do in conventional operations because of the large number of people outside their own organization with whom they have to consult.

Although this chapter has been written in the context of countering insurgency, there are other sorts of low intensity operations that could take place. For example, the activities of a force involved in home defence in a country that has not actually been invaded, could come under this heading. In this case, operations might be in progress related to helping the civil community handle the effects of serious air attack. In addition, troops might be involved in searching out enemy-sponsored saboteurs or even helping the police to control crowds protesting against food shortages or lack of medical care in the wake of serious air raids, for example. In any of these circumstances there would be something in common with the countering of insurgency in so far as the direction of operations was concerned, with particular reference to the setting up of a framework within which many different aspects of government endeavour could be harnessed together.

Peace-keeping which consists of intervening between two sides in a dispute, at the request of both of them, for the purpose of helping to find a solution, is another form of low intensity operation, although force should not be used except in self-defence. This activity is usually conducted under the auspices of the United Nations, or of some other international

organization. Commanders should understand the business in case they become involved, but it is not necessary to describe the various ways in which a peace-keeping force should operate, since it is less exacting than fighting insurgents and does not require special additional attributes: an officer who is capable of commanding successfully in counter-insurgency should certainly be able to meet the demands of peace-keeping, providing that he knows the job thoroughly. The underlying dilemma is how to get enough information to know when the contestants are not telling the truth, under circumstances when finding out more than either party wishes to disclose is regarded as a hostile act.¹

In the last resort the difference between low intensity operations and those that take place higher up the scale relates largely to the speed at which they develop and the stakes involved, rather than to the tactics employed. Tactics vary greatly regardless of the category of operation being considered and a **commander** should be able to cope with whatever arises, because he cannot tell in advance what form of operation he is going to be required to undertake. Although high intensity operations may make the greater demands on a **commander** from a physical point of view, low intensity operations call for just as much knowledge and skill and an even greater degree of intellectual suppleness and subtlety. Furthermore, fighting insurgents over a long period can only be successfully carried out by commanders possessed of energy, stamina and robustness.

Note

¹ For a fuller treatment of peace-keeping, see Frank Kitson, *Low Intensity Operations*, Faber and Faber, London, 1971, pp. 144-61.

COMMAND IN PEACETIME

All armies spend more time preparing for war than taking part in operations. Furthermore, the business of preparing for war is different from directing operations. But the commanders who are preparing the units and formations in peacetime, must be ready to take their formations into battle if the need arises, because there is unlikely to be time to change them for other commanders on the outbreak of hostilities. Therefore, only people who are properly prepared and ready to direct operations, can be allowed to command field army formations in peacetime.

None the less, the exercise of command in peace is not the same as it is in war and does not make exactly the same demands on a person. Whether or not a man lacking in some of the qualities of a wartime commander could cope adequately in peace does not matter, because he must have the ability to direct operations in war, in order to be ready in time. What does matter is that a man who is suitable as a wartime commander, should have the extra qualities needed to enable him to function in peacetime, if he is being appointed in peace.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine what is involved in commanding large formations of the field army in peace, so that the qualities required and the measures necessary for instilling them, can be taken into account in the discussion contained in Parts 2 and 3 of this book.

The exercise of command in peacetime can conveniently be considered under two main heads. The first of these is making

plans to deal with the many operational contingencies that may arise. The second is ensuring that all the formations with their logistic backing, are capable of putting the various plans into effect and of dealing with such unexpected situations as may occur. As most countries rely heavily on reservists of one sort or another, their contribution has to be considered both in terms of planning and preparation.

Both of these tasks involve a number of different activities. In effect, a commander has to do in peace most of the things that he has to do in war, with the exception of keeping control of current operations. But this major function is replaced by another equally demanding one, namely resisting the erosion of the effectiveness of his force by those whose job it is to save money. Although a government's first duty is to secure the country against external or internal threats, it has to be sure that it is not paying more than is necessary for the purpose, especially as an internal threat could even come about if over-expenditure on defence resulted in too great a reduction in the country's standard of living. Notwithstanding this consideration, it usually happens that governments spend too little on defence, in relation to the threat, because of pressure from their electorates to spend money on more attractive projects.

Making contingency plans is normally the province of senior commanders and their staffs, sometimes in conjunction with allies, and always in conjunction with the other services and with the country's defence ministry which lays down the purpose of the operation and provides the resources. There are numerous difficulties to be overcome when making contingency plans in peacetime, some examples of which are given below.

One common difficulty is getting the aim of a projected operation defined with sufficient clarity. This is necessary if a proper relationship is to be established between the different services, between the services and civilian organizations, and between allies. The problem often arises from the fact that it is difficult for a government to know exactly what it will

want the force to do when a threat is just beginning to develop, but unless some sort of plan is made, there may be no units or logistic backing available when required. For example, when making a plan to safeguard nationals in the event of a major disturbance arising in an overseas country, there may be no clear knowledge, when the plan is made, of what is going to bring about the unrest and consequently it is impossible to know whether the force will have to co-operate with a local government or oppose it. Commanders responsible for making and implementing plans must therefore keep themselves abreast of the circumstances prevailing in the areas for which plans have been made and they should also encourage the appropriate intelligence organizations to get more information and keep it up to date, so that they can amend their plans as necessary.

Another problem is the desire to be economic with resources. There are seldom enough of them to cover all the different plans that have to be made, so that units, formations and logistic supplies have to be held against more than one plan, that is to say they have to be double earmarked. The difficulty here is that the circumstances that cause one of the plans to be put into effect, may also spark off the need to implement other plans requiring some of the same resources. From a governmental point of view there is often political and economic advantage in taking on more commitments than the resources provided can realistically underwrite and it is up to the commanders whose job it is to make and implement the plans to give clear warnings of the dangers involved.

The essence of a commander's role in peacetime planning, in addition to the exercise of military judgement on the plans themselves, is to insist on realism regarding the defining of the aim and the allocation of resources.

The next thing is to show what a commander in peacetime has to do, in order to make his force ready to carry out the various operational plans that may need implementing. This can be examined under four main headings. First, equipment and doctrine. Second, organization. Third, training. Fourth,

maintaining all ranks in a good frame of mind. In all these matters commanders have to work closely with their defence ministry in order to ensure that there is a common standard throughout the army.

Tactics consist of applying resources under a particular set of circumstances in order to achieve a specific tactical aim. In open warfare between two or more countries, the most important considerations governing tactics are usually the characteristics of the weapons available and the terrain over which operations are taking place. This is important not only in terms of forests, plains, etc., but also of distances between frontiers and vital centres of population or industry. In counter-insurgency operations, tactics are more likely to be governed by the political background of the campaign and the way the civilian population feel, although terrain may well be a major consideration with particular reference to the extent to which concealment is possible outside urban areas, and the availability of food supplies.

Most, if not all, armies try to establish tactical doctrine designed to cover the conduct of their forces in battle and to act as a guide to training. An army's policy for obtaining weapons and equipment is also based on this doctrine to some extent, although the doctrine itself largely depends on the weapons available, i.e. there is a chicken-and-egg aspect to it. An army's tactical doctrine must of necessity be elastic if it is to cover wide areas of military operations. For example, although it may be possible to design separate doctrines to cover, say, the use of conventional forces in temperate climates, or in mountainous and arctic warfare, or in counter-insurgency operations, each must be fairly general if it is to be of practical value as a basis for instruction in depots, arms schools, staff colleges, etc. It would clearly be impossible for an army to have enough separate tactical doctrines to cover each contingency plan. By its very nature doctrine has to be co-ordinated at the top, although if it is to be of any use, it can be formulated only by collecting and synthesizing the opinions of all the commanders responsible for putting a country's war plans into effect.

In addition to a commander's general role in helping to establish the army's tactical doctrine, he has a direct responsibility for ensuring that his own formations and units are organized, equipped and trained to carry out the particular roles that are likely to be allocated to them in war, although it is worth bearing in mind that they may well get switched to some other role at the last moment.

Equipment and organization go hand in hand to the extent that organizing a force to be ready to carry out a given operational plan consists largely of grouping together units with the required equipment, e.g. so many units of infantry, so many of artillery and so much logistic backing, etc. There are, of course, variations within these different categories, in that some artillery units are armed with one sort of weapon and some with another and the same applies to the other arms as well.

The way in which formations and units are grouped together in peace is no different, in principle, from the way in which a commander in war groups and regroups his units and formations in order to handle the different tactical objectives that confront him. In practice there is a slight difference in that, as described earlier, formations and units may be held in peacetime to cover a number of war plans, so that the peacetime grouping is arranged to cater for training for all the contingencies and a regrouping has to take place if a particular operation has to be implemented. But grouping either in war or in peace is essentially the responsibility of commanders.

The way in which units are organized internally is, however, usually standardized throughout an army so that commanders know more or less what they will get if they are allocated, say, a mechanized infantry battalion, or a self-propelled field artillery battalion/regiment. Although these organizations have to change from time to time to suit changes in weapons and tactical doctrine, the changes have to come from the top, after consultation with commanders at all levels. Such changes have far-reaching effects on the officers and men in the units concerned and are not much liked. They are therefore avoided as far as possible, in the interests of

stability. But they are often necessary and it is a function of commanders to ensure that operational advantages are not sacrificed at the altar of administrative convenience. In any army stability breeds stagnation as well as contentment and it is only the senior commanders who can bring enough pressure to bear to force through change when required.

The procurement of equipment, from the earliest stages of research and development to production, is also primarily a matter for a country's defence ministry, but it is one in which commanders obviously have a great interest. As financial resources are bound to be limited, it is up to commanders to present the case for developing new weapons and equipment relevant to the operations that they may be called upon to undertake, as clearly as they can. This is necessary if decisions as to what should be developed or otherwise obtained should be made in the light of all the prevailing factors. It is important that commanders in peacetime should keep themselves fully up to date with regard to advances in military technology so that they can fulfil their obligations in this respect.

The next function of commanders in peacetime is the training of their forces. Formations and units have to be trained in the first place to carry out the war roles for which they are earmarked, but they also have to achieve a reasonable standard of general training in case they get switched to cover some other contingency at short notice. It may well be that formations or units which come under a commander in peace, and which may be earmarked to operate under his command for some operations, may also be earmarked for transfer to another commander in another area for a different operation. For example, a force held in America for use in a limited war in the Middle or Far East, might have to be ready to send one or more of its divisions to serve under a NATO commander in Europe in the event of an all-out war against Russia. In this case the force commander in America must not only train his formations for their primary role in the Middle or Far East, but he must also discover what would be required of the divisions that he might have to send to Europe and train them accordingly. From the point of view of senior commanders,

training consists as much of discovering exactly what his formations will have to do as of organizing the training itself.

The running of the training on the ground is in fact the job of the more junior commanders, e.g. divisional and brigade commanders, the senior ones being mainly concerned with arranging inter-service participation and providing training areas, ensuring that resources such as fuel and ammunition are available and above all organizing time and commitments in such a way that enough of the units of a formation are available to train together. Senior commanders are also responsible for deciding whether army doctrine needs to be adjusted when used as a basis for training for a particular operation. If so, they do it by issuing training directives relevant to their command.

Good training is an absolute essential in peacetime as the effectiveness of formations and units when operations commence is largely dependent on it. On the other hand, when money is short, countries often prefer to cut back on training, or logistic backing, rather than reduce the size of their forces because, superficially at least, size counts for more than efficiency in terms of deterrence. Once again it falls to the commanders to make sure that the true position is constantly brought home to those responsible in a country's defence ministry.

It is also important that field army commanders take an interest in what is being taught in individual training establishments, such as arms schools and staff colleges, to ensure that army doctrine regarding their particular sphere of interest has not become out of date.

The last and most important task of commanders in peace is to ensure that their troops remain in a good frame of mind. This is essential if units are to be properly prepared for their various roles, and even more essential if they are ever committed to carrying them out. History shows, over and over again, that large numbers, good organization, up-to-date equipment and sophisticated tactical doctrine are all useless if the soldiers are demoralized, although all these things have a part to play in maintaining morale at a high level. But there

are other aspects to the business worth mentioning, some of which are primarily the responsibility of a country's defence ministry and some of which are mainly the business of commanders.

It is the business of defence ministries to ensure that terms of service such as pay, food, accommodation, leave and provision for dependants are satisfactory throughout an army, regardless of whether the men are volunteers or conscripts. Maintaining terms of service at an adequate level costs much money, which has to be balanced against other military expenditure, and there is a natural temptation to economize in this direction, in order to spend as much as possible on weapons and equipment with a more obvious military and deterrent value. Although commanders have an interest in having the weapons and equipment, they are also responsible for their men's morale and are in a better position to assess it than those in a defence ministry. It is therefore very much part of their job to make up their mind on a proper balance and represent their views vigorously up the chain of command. In peacetime it is natural to find that the commanders most closely in touch with the troops, i.e. those at the lower levels, are the most strident in their demands for improvements in terms of service, especially as they are less aware of the price that has to be paid for improving them. But they are none the less in a better position to appreciate the need to alter terms of service, to take account of changing social trends and their views must be listened to by the more senior commanders.

Another matter which is primarily the function of defence ministries, but in which commanders have a direct interest, is in the appointment of officers. Selecting the right people to hold key appointments has a direct bearing on the efficiency of formations and units and on the frame of mind of the men in them. In most armies commanders play a part in the appointments process and in all of them they are concerned with assessing the performance of officers once appointed. It is essential that they should exercise this function rigorously. It is all too easy in peacetime to make allowances for

shortcomings, on the basis that the person in question will soon be posted elsewhere and that he might be successful in a different sort of job. In other words, out of a mistaken sense of fairness, a man may be allowed to continue in a job after it is evident that he would not be able to do it properly in an operational situation. Such an attitude shirks the possibility that a future operation could be jeopardized, to say nothing of the peril in which many other people could be placed. In this matter the most exacting commander is the fairest.

But whereas the main responsibility for terms of service and appointments lies in a country's defence ministry, it is commanders who are primarily responsible for maintaining discipline, and discipline is as essential for building up morale as it is for fighting battles. Although the outward forms of discipline can and should vary according to the sort of army that a country maintains, there is no substitute for it. Furthermore, it must be absolutely effective.

Ideally a workable discipline should be based on an understanding of the perils facing a country and on the consequent desire of each individual soldier to do his best. Where the threat to a country's existence is very immediate and obvious it can just about sustain a sufficiently strong discipline, but more usually sanctions of one sort or another are required as well. There are plenty of opinions as to how discipline should be instilled into soldiers, such as an insistence on a smart appearance or excellence at drill, backed by the imposition of savage penalties for infringements. Clearly, a method that reflects to some extent the way of life of the country concerned is the most satisfactory, because it keeps the army in tune with the population as a whole. But whatever system is adopted must be totally effective, since undisciplined units cannot cope with war of any sort, least of all with counter-insurgency operations where superhuman restraint is often required in order to win over waverers who might be driven into the arms of the insurgents by a normal reaction to provocation. This means that strong discipline has to be maintained regardless of social pressures.

Perhaps the most useful thing that a commander can do to

ensure that Ms troops remain in a good frame of mind is to explain to them the relevance of the tasks that confront them. Life for soldiers in peacetime is often much harder than it is for their civilian counterparts. Quite apart from the rigours of training, which include maintaining a high level of fitness throughout the year and spending long periods cold, wet, hungry and short of sleep, soldiers are often stationed in thoroughly uncongenial places and have to face repeated periods of separation from their families. It is important for them to know exactly why this should be the case, which involves telling them about the international background to their posting and as much as possible about the potential enemy and what it will take to gain the upper hand should hostilities occur. Although it is the task of unit commanders to speak directly to the men, the impetus and much of the necessary information has to come from above. There is, therefore, no reason why more senior commanders should not talk directly to the soldiers when opportunities occur and they must certainly talk to their officers.

From the above brief diversion from the problems of directing operations, it can be seen that the various tasks of a senior commander in peacetime have a very direct bearing on the success that a country's army can expect to have in war. Indeed, it might be felt that the more varied nature of the tasks and the difficulties of getting unpopular ideas accepted when the imperatives of immediate peril are less obvious indicate that a different sort of commander is needed. But for the reasons given at the start of this chapter, commanders have to be capable of carrying out both roles. In Part 2 of this book the qualities required of commanders will be discussed with this fact in mind.

It only remains to stress once more that no matter how good the planning and how well equipped and organized a force may be, operational success will ultimately depend on the fighting qualities of the officers and men in the units. The main function of commanders at all levels in peacetime is to keep assessing this, both in terms of units as a whole and in

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terms of key individuals in those units: they must direct their efforts towards promoting measures that will increase it, while opposing those that could erode it, and they need to be absolutely ruthless in getting their way. When all the problems ranging from shortage of money to the difficulties of imposing discipline are considered, it is hardly surprising to find that countries sometimes fail to produce units capable of carrying out the tasks allocated to them. None the less, unless they can do so, all the money and labour that goes towards raising and maintaining an army in peace will be wasted. In one sense, therefore, the unit is the end-product of the commander's efforts and no matter how senior he is, he must never forget it.

KNOWING THE JOB

The main purpose of Part 2 of this book is to separate the qualities required of a senior operational commander from the complexities of his task and surroundings, and to discuss them in as much detail as is necessary for an understanding of Part 3, which examines how armies can select and prepare such people.

There are, of course, some appointments that officers have to fill which have nothing to do with directing operations. Most of them are held by people who will never be operational commanders and whose selection and preparation do not overlap with the production of operational commanders. Although these people may hold important positions and do work that is essential for the effective working of an army, they do not need further mention in the context of this book.

But there are other jobs that get filled by people who alternate between doing them and acting as operational commanders. The reason for this is either that the other jobs have an educational role in preparing officers to direct operations, or that the holding of a command appointment provides experience desirable for carrying out one of these other jobs. For example, potential operational commanders may learn a lot about command from holding certain staff appointments. At the same time a few of the top jobs in a country's defence ministry and in the training organization can only be held successfully by people who have held senior command positions. Clearly the qualities required to carry out these jobs must also be discussed in Part 2 of this book in order to see

whether they are compatible with those needed by operational commanders.

Part 2 consists of four chapters. The first of these discusses what is involved in 'knowing the job' in so far as the direction of operations is concerned and the second contains a description of the characteristics that an operational commander requires. The third chapter looks at the same two matters in relation to staff officers and officers in the training organization and the fourth looks at them as they affect those officers who come between operational commanders and the politicians. This group includes the very senior officers in a country's defence ministry and also the supreme commanders and theatre commanders in an alliance. It also touches on the extra qualities required by the commanders of field force units in peace, over and above those that they need in order to carry out their duties in war.

Although the basis of operational command, that is to say the making of a plan, the putting of it into effect and the subsequent adapting of it so as to exploit such opportunities as may arise, is simple enough, it can only be successfully carried out by a man who possesses an unusual selection of qualities. For the sake of convenience, the business of 'knowing the job' can be considered under three main heads. First, developing the ability to think clearly. Second, building up the knowledge needed. Third, gaining experience. There is, of course, a considerable overlap between knowledge and experience.

Thinking with absolute clarity is fundamental to much of what a commander has to do. In planning, it is essential for selecting and defining the aim with the uncompromising precision needed to ensure that the rest of the process can be carried out without misunderstanding: clarity of thought is then needed for selecting the best option. Clear thinking is the basis of effective expression, whether by speech or in writing, which a commander needs in order to sell and defend his plan to his subordinates, his political or military superiors, or his

colleagues and allies. Finally, a commander must be able to think clearly while operations are in progress in order to make decisions that will turn events to his advantage.

Clear thinking is a habit which anyone of average intelligence can develop, although they are unlikely to do so unless they are taught how to do it and then practise it over a long period. It depends on establishing a consistent and logical process for working out everyday problems and sticking to it so that it becomes second nature. The habit can then be expanded to suit more complicated situations, including those encountered in the direction of military operations. In outline such a process might follow these lines.

The first thing is to decide exactly what it is that has to be done. This is the most difficult part of the process. If there appears to be more than one thing to be done, it must mean that none of them is the ultimate purpose, but that they are, in effect, intermediate aims. Once this becomes clear, the real purpose can probably be identified by weighing them up against each other.

The next thing to do is to make sure that the achievement of this object is really desired. There may, on reflection, be good reasons for not wanting to achieve it: for example, it might turn out to be morally wrong or it might interfere with the achievement of something more important. If this is the case, it is a waste of time to continue, but if it is decided to go ahead, these misgivings should never again be considered, or they will become confused with the quite separate considerations that have to be weighed up when working out how the objective should be reached.

These separate considerations should now be examined to see if there are any that need not affect the achievement of the objective, even though it might be comfortable to let them do so in the interest of personal convenience. They are false considerations and should be put to one side for the time being. By weighing up the remaining considerations it should be relatively easy to work out how best to achieve the aim.

Only after this has been done is it justifiable to take another look at the false considerations to see whether a different way

of achieving the objective can be worked out which takes account of them. If so, it can be adopted, but it is likely to be a less good way and it is necessary to recognize this fact. In other words, even if a person desires to mislead others he should certainly make sure that he does not mislead himself.

In practice it must be realized that some data bearing on the achievement of an objective may well fail to be considered, because knowledge of it is lacking. This means that a perfectly orderly thought-process can sometimes lead to a wrong conclusion. The business of adjusting to take account of this is known as the exercise of judgement. This is the proper meaning of the phrase, although it is often used to describe the incorrect weighing-up of known considerations to satisfy preconceived prejudices. The ability to think straight can be developed by ensuring that some form of this procedure is adopted when writing papers or when preparing speeches.

At the same time that a potential commander is teaching himself to think with absolute clarity, he can be building up a store of professional knowledge and gaining experience.

There is an almost unlimited amount of knowledge available relating to the direction of military operations, which is far beyond the power of any man to store in his head. Furthermore, in addition to specific data, there is the knowledge which conditions the mind and thereby enables a person to take advantage of whatever opportunity has to offer. Available knowledge is endlessly changing for many reasons, but particularly because of technological developments. As in other walks of life, a military commander has to decide what knowledge he needs to have in his head and this he must keep up to date. For the rest he must ensure that he knows where to find it quickly when he wants it, which usually means getting it from his staff.

The data that he must keep in his head is that which he needs for minute-to-minute thinking, as opposed to deliberate planning. Although this must include some technical data such as the range of the main weapons, the endurance provided by existing stock levels and the rough time it

takes to move formations from one place to another, the more important part relates to his knowledge of the particular peculiarities of the various formations and units with which he has to deal, including any naval, air or paramilitary forces that may be supporting him. The success of his plans will depend greatly on how well he can combine the activities of these groups and although there may be several statistically workable options at a particular moment, one way may be far superior to another, based on the characteristics of the particular groups concerned. For example, in the case of two identically structured divisions, one may be more suited to a dogged defence whereas the other might be better able to carry out a counter-attack, either because of a difference in their recent experience, or because of the nature of the soldiers concerned, stemming possibly from their place of origin.

A commander's personal store of knowledge must also embrace as much as he can find out above the individuals that can affect the outcome of his operations, their relationships with each other and the organization of the structures to which they belong. This applies both to the enemy, to all those organizations with whom he is trying to concert his operations and, of course, to his own force.

In order to have the right stock of knowledge in his head when he wants it, a man has to keep building it up throughout his life by straightforward learning. He then has to keep sifting it, discarding what is out of date and revising what is left. It is important that his store of knowledge should include basic material relevant to all the different sorts of war, e.g. mechanized, amphibious, counter-insurgency, etc. so that he can at least take over a command position with a good general idea of what is involved. Although to some extent the building up of knowledge can be done by talking and observation, the most important way of collecting it is by reading. For this reason a person who aspires to become an operational commander must develop the habit of planned reading from his earliest days and keep it up throughout his professional life, whether he is occupying a command position at the time or not.

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One way of collecting knowledge is by experience, that is by remembering facts that have been absorbed in the course of carrying out some activity. But experience means more than the accumulation of facts since it covers the recollection of how things developed in previous situations, together with a realization of how this memory may be put to good use in the future. Experience, therefore, although partly an aspect of knowledge, is more than an accumulation of data.

Experience comes mainly from two sources. First, there is the experience that a commander collects as a result of his own activities over the years, starting from the time he receives his first command, usually as a very young man. This is by far the most important source of experience and any man wishing to become a useful commander should be given every opportunity to spend as much time as possible in an operational situation.

Even if he cannot hold a command appointment, he will learn more where operations are going on than he will anywhere else. Furthermore, taking part in any sort of active operation provides better preparation for other sorts of war than taking part in training exercises, because it faces people with the need to fit their actions to actual circumstances that cannot be manipulated. This arises from the fact that a real enemy in real surroundings cannot be manipulated in the same way as an exercise enemy on a training area. Thus, for example, a man who commanded a brigade in Vietnam would have gained more useful experience about commanding a division on the European Central Region than one who commanded a brigade in Germany, provided that he had kept his stock of knowledge about armoured and mechanized warfare up to date.

But it is often difficult to provide opportunities for active service, in which case the next-best experience for someone being prepared for operational command is to be a commander in a place where he can take part in realistic training exercises. Some useful experience can be gained in other ways such as on training courses or on staffs within the field army, but there can be no doubt that the best way of getting

experience of war is by taking part in it, and the best way of getting experience of command is to command.

Another way of gaining experience exists, which is to get it at second hand from other people by reading about them.

When it comes to reading about the experience of others, it is important to know exactly what it is about them that is worth observing, since the problems that faced the great performers in history are so totally different from anything that is likely to be encountered in the future as to make their plans for dealing with them valueless. For example, if Napoleon with his store of knowledge and experience had appeared on the Normandy beaches in 1944 to advise Montgomery, he would have been utterly useless and would doubtless have been told so. It is a waste of time to read about figures from the past in order to discover what they would do if faced with a current situation. The only thing that is of value is to see how they managed to fit their resources to the achievement of their aim in accordance with the precise circumstances prevailing at that time.

But although circumstances are always changing, there are certain principles for applying resources, in accordance with whatever is going on at the time, that seem to have remained the same throughout history, and it is worth realizing that success in the past has usually been achieved by acting in accordance with these principles. They are, in effect, a distillation of the combined experiences of the many thousands of commanders who have operated throughout recorded history and it is certainly worth trying to profit from them.

The value of understanding the underlying principles governing the conduct of operations was greatly stressed at one time, but is now largely neglected in the British Army. The reason for this is not clear, but probably comes from the fact that people have ceased to realize exactly what is meant by the word principle: in studying past campaigns people find difficulty in separating principles from events so that they often think of the event itself as an example of a principle. This confusion has resulted in undervaluing the relevance of principles to those involved in preparing themselves for such

a pressing activity as fighting a battle. But it is none the less useful to absorb the distilled experience of the ages, particularly in peacetime when it is difficult to gain experience firsthand, so it is worth looking more closely at the nature of principles in relation to war.

Principles can only influence events through the agency of human beings. They do so in two ways. First, by conditioning a person's subconscious so that he reacts in accordance with the principle when suddenly confronted with a situation. Second, by being present in a person's conscious mind when he is making a plan.

To illustrate this point it is only necessary to draw a comparison with the sort of principles that occur in everyday life. Such principles represent the distillation of human experience over many thousands of years and many of them have been incorporated into the teaching of religious leaders who sometimes claim to have received them direct from God. Honesty is a principle of life that is widely, though not universally, accepted and it can be seen to influence people in the two ways mentioned. First, by conditioning a person subconsciously in such a way that if suddenly asked a question which it would be advantageous to answer with a lie, he tells the truth. Second, by conditioning his conscious mind in such a way that he does not plan to do dishonest things even when it would be to his advantage to do so.

A principle of life is designed to govern a person's conduct so that he achieves his aim of leading a good life. Similarly, a principle of war is designed to govern a person's conduct so that he achieves his war aim of defeating the enemy. This is the true nature of a principle of war.

Principles of war influence events through the agency of human beings in the same two ways. First, by conditioning the subconscious so that a man reacts to a sudden situation in accordance with them, even if he has no time to think. Second, by occurring to someone consciously when he is making a plan, or when he is examining a plan made by someone else and sent to him for comment.

It is particularly important to notice the conscious

application, because it affects an officer throughout his career both as a staff officer and as a commander. The key factor in this case is the use of the principles in planning. Once the plan has been put into effect the principles do not affect the outcome, unless they cause the person to change his plan. The application of the principles of war is both important and practical and there is no substitute for ingraining them on both the conscious and subconscious mind by constant thought and study.

There are two ways in which a person can absorb the principles of war. The first is to look at the way in which his own plans, made in the light of them, or the plans of the people with whom he is working, turn out in practice. This is the best way, but is only available to people taking part in operations and even then it involves being in a particular sort of operational job where a lot more can be discovered, especially about the enemy, than is usually the case. The other alternative is to study military history.

It is all too easy to read military history without studying it. It is no good reading a campaign history through as a novel and leaving it at that. It is first necessary to extract the various plans from the narrative and then to examine them from the point of view of a staff officer to whom the commander has given them for comment. The next thing is to look at the way in which the commanders put their plans into effect and finally to see how the plans worked out. In other words, read the narrative to absorb the background, isolate the various plans made at different times during the campaign by both sides and then reread the narrative to see what happened.

But before this can be done some consideration must be given to the principles themselves. Over the years principles of war have been codified in many different forms, in the same way as the principles of life have been codified by many different religions. There are several different versions in use today. For the purpose of this study the ten principles of war as formulated by the British Army Council in 1950 will be used, but it is important to realize that they are no more than the fruits of experience and that other interpretations are just

as good, provided that they are properly understood and absorbed. The British version of the principles, very slightly amended to make them more relevant in the nuclear age, is as follows.

The Selection and Maintenance of the Aim This is regarded as the master principle. In the conduct of any war and in every separate operation in that war it is essential to select and define the aim. Each operation must be directed towards the achievement of the stated aim of the war as a whole, but will have a more limited aim which must itself be clearly defined. Once the aim is decided upon, all efforts must be directed to its attainment until a changed situation calls for a new aim. No other principle is as important as this and the remainder are not given in any order of priority.

Maintenance of Morale History indicates that success in war depends more on moral than physical qualities. Numbers, armament and resources cannot compensate for lack of courage, energy, determination, skill and the bold offensive spirit. The development and subsequent maintenance of the qualities of morale are therefore essential to success in war.

Offensive Action Offensive action is the necessary forerunner of success; it may be delayed, but until the initiative is seized and the offensive taken, success is impossible.

Security A sufficient degree of security is essential in order to obtain freedom of action in pursuit of the achievement of the aim. This involves adequate defence of vulnerable assets and interests. Security does not imply undue caution and the avoidance of all risks, for bold action is essential in war. On the contrary, with security provided for, unexpected developments are unlikely to interfere seriously with the pursuit of a vigorous offensive.

Surprise This is a most effective and powerful influence in war and its moral effect is very great. Every endeavour must be made to surprise the enemy and to guard against being surprised. By the use of surprise, results out of all proportion to the effort expended can be obtained and, in some

operations when other factors are unfavourable, surprise may be essential to success. The elements of surprise are secrecy, concealment, deception, originality, audacity and rapidity.

Concentration of Force To achieve success in war it is essential to concentrate superior force, moral and material, to that of the enemy at the decisive time and place. Concentration does not necessarily imply a massing of forces, but rather having them so disposed as to be able to unite to deliver the decisive blow when and where required, or to counter the enemy's threats. Concentration is a matter more of time than of space.

Economy of Effort This implies a balanced employment of resources and a judicious expenditure of all resources with the object of achieving an effective concentration at the decisive time and place.

Flexibility War demands a high degree of flexibility to enable prearranged plans to be altered to meet changing situations and unexpected developments. This entails good training, organization, discipline and staff work and above all that flexibility of mind and rapidity of decision which ensures that time is never lost. It calls for mobility of a high order so that forces can be concentrated rapidly and economically at decisive places and times.

Co-operation Based on team spirit, this entails the co-ordination of all units so as to achieve the maximum combined effort from the whole. Above all, goodwill and the desire to co-operate are essential. The dependence of the services on one another and on civilian agencies makes co-operation vital in war.

Administration Administrative arrangements must be designed to give the commander the maximum freedom of action in carrying out the plan. Every administrative organization must be simple. Every operational commander must have a degree of control over the administrative plan within his sphere of command, corresponding to the scope of his responsibilities for the operational plan.

When considering the principles of war, the important thing is to consider them together and not in isolation. The difficulty

of making a plan is not how to bring in the principles but how to balance the needs of one against another, or of a combination of two or three against the requirements of two or three others. Used in this way, in a rough-and-ready fashion, they constitute a useful check-list when studying the past or when planning an operation. They should be looked on in this light and should certainly not be regarded as a magic formula that will provide an answer to all tactical problems. An analysis of a historical campaign is given in the appendix to illustrate this point. It is not included at this point for fear that it might interrupt the development of the main argument.

In view of the fact that the principles of war are well known in one form or another and available to everyone, it is worth looking at two of the most common reasons for their neglect. The main reason is that they are literally neglected because commanders do not study them, or know how to apply them. The other reason is that commanders frequently set about making plans with a preconceived idea as to the tactical methods that they will adopt. These preconceived ideas often spring from following a habit or doctrine evolved for use in circumstances which have subsequently altered.

Developing the power of clear thinking, building up a store of knowledge of facts, opinions and procedures and gaining relevant experience, are all necessary before a man can exercise operational command successfully. Collectively they amount to knowing the job. But a commander must not only know his job. He must also be possessed of a number of characteristics. These will be examined in the next chapter.

CHARACTERISTICS

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the characteristics that a commander needs in order to conduct operations successfully. Although officers need a number of different characteristics to carry out the other appointments that are likely to come their way, they will not be covered in this chapter, which is solely concerned with the direction of operations.

The first characteristic to be considered is energy. There are two sorts of energy required: physical and mental.

Operational commanders need plenty of physical energy in order to appear at the right place at the right time. Only by keeping on the move can they be correctly situated to make important decisions and at the same time remain in touch with their subordinate commanders and be seen by their men.

Improved methods of communication which have blossomed beyond the wildest imaginings of people a quarter of a century ago, and which include computerized circuits and two-way television, enable a commander to carry out more of his business from his main or tactical headquarters than was formerly the case. This technology should certainly be exploited to the hilt, but even the most sophisticated communications systems cannot always be a substitute for direct contact, especially when it comes to getting a feel for how things are going, or having truly confidential discussion with subordinates or superiors, or being present to inspire confidence. Ever since the earliest communication systems were

invented some commanders have used them as an excuse for not travelling and throughout history such people have been outwitted and outfought by those who have been prepared to exert themselves to the full. It is very difficult to realize how strong are the pressures on a commander to stay in his headquarters during a period of intense operations and only the truly energetic man will be able to overcome them.

Visiting is an essential part of a commander's job in all sorts of war, although different types of operation produce different reasons for doing it. For example, the necessity for getting around and talking to a large number of influential people, which is such a feature of counter-insurgency operations, does not apply in the conditions that exist in, say, a clash between mechanized forces, but in this case the reasons mentioned in the last paragraph make it necessary. The important thing to understand is that it will only get done, in whatever form is required, by a person of unbounded energy. It may be difficult for those unacquainted with the problem to understand its importance, but history bears ample witness to the amazing influence that the sheer animal energy of a commander can have on events.

But if physical energy is important, mental energy is doubly so. Certainly there are times when a commander does not have to be travelling, but there are very few moments when he can afford to stop thinking. A commander's mind has to be turning over all day long, if he is to keep one jump ahead of the enemy and at the same time anticipate the reactions of his subordinates, superiors, colleagues and allies to the developing situation. A successful commander needs to work out what these various people will be thinking before they think it themselves, so that he is in a position to help or forestall them in the interests of achieving his aim. No matter how much he relies on his staff to get hold of information, to make plans or to issue his orders, it is the commander himself who provides the impetus and who often has the most detailed knowledge, especially as it applies to the feelings of the people on his own side. As a man gets older, it is only intense mental energy that can stop him from doing things

merely because they have proved successful for him in the past, without checking to see that they are still precisely what is needed, in the light of existing circumstances, for the achievement of his current aim.

Intense mental energy, combined with an adequate store of knowledge, is the foundation of creative thought, which is itself the conscious manifestation of the subconscious state known as imagination. It is the possession of creative ability and imagination which distinguishes the great commander from the merely competent.

It is difficult to know what makes one man energetic and another less so. No doubt a man's upbringing has a lot to do with it, together with an intense desire to achieve. Such a desire can itself spring from a number of different emotions, such as a lust for power, or a wish to impress, or a highly developed sense of duty, or patriotism, or even a determination to fulfil what he considers to be the will of God. Very often it is a mixture of several of these emotions; the person concerned and his supporters attributing his desire to achieve to the more respectable ones, while his detractors take a less charitable view. A degree of physical fitness must play a part in promoting energy, but it is surprising how often in history the frailest men have managed to push themselves to the limit of endurance when driven by a sufficiently demanding motive force. Even age, which normally reduces fitness and damps down the intensity of the desire to achieve, is sometimes held at bay by a really strong motive force such as the longing for power.

The next quality that a commander needs is courage. As with energy there are two sorts: physical and moral.

A commander needs physical courage in order to make himself go to, and stay in, the right place regardless of the degree of danger involved. He also needs it to remain calm and decisive when he is in a dangerous position and to this extent it becomes a significant element in the business of projecting confidence throughout the force, since stories of a commander's courage, or lack of it, soon spread. It is,

incidentally, possible to find people who appear to be perfectly calm in a crisis, but whose ability to make even the simplest decision has evaporated. These people are in effect paralysed and although less likely to cause panic than those whose fear takes them in different ways, are none the less unsuitable as commanders.

But a commander needs moral courage to a far greater extent. Without it, he can not make the right decisions when much is at stake: he may even be tempted to compromise where no compromise is possible. Furthermore, without moral courage a commander will find it difficult to give a subordinate clear direction and then leave him free to carry out his task for fear that some error will be made, although the ability to decentralize, within clearly laid-down limits, is an essential aspect of effective command.

The difficulties of proper decentralizing have, incidentally, been accentuated in recent years by the development of ever more effective communication systems which make it much easier for a commander to interfere in the activities of his subordinates.¹ At the same time other technological developments have increased the amount of data available at every level which make it even more important that a senior commander should not interfere in his subordinates' business, as the sheer volume of information requires that responsible judgement should be exercised at the lower levels: too much centralization results in the senior commander being swamped in detail. In other words, it is better to use the ever-improving technology to pass known information downwards, thereby giving subordinate commanders the best opportunities for making and carrying out their own plans for achieving the tasks given them from above, than it is to collect their data and then usurp their functions. In a counter-insurgency campaign there is not even a rational alternative if army command arrangements are fully integrated with those of the police and civil authorities as they should be. But in all forms of warfare it takes moral courage to avoid interfering with subordinates to whatever extent is technically possible, particularly if there is sustained pressure from above.

Finally, without moral courage a commander will not allow his subordinates to get close enough to him: it is so much easier to keep them at arm's length behind a barrier of polite clichés and thus avoid the embarrassment of explaining difficult or unpleasant decisions.

Courage, therefore, is still one of the essential attributes of the operational commander, and of all the characteristics it is the most difficult to develop in a person who has not been born with it. All that can be said is that physical courage does increase, up to a point, with acclimatization to danger. It is also catching. Thus, although it is the function of the commander to inspire courage in his subordinates, he can also gain courage from them. Moral courage can be enhanced over a period by making a practice of facing up to problems as soon as they arise and by making careful notes of any evasion of responsibility with a view to remembering it for the future.

The next characteristic that an operational commander needs is self-confidence. He needs self-confidence because he must be sure that the plan he has adopted and the decisions he has made while trying to implement it are the right ones. There will always be plenty of people around who want him to change course, either because they do not like their own part in his plan, or because it is not compatible with their own different ones. There will also be the action of the enemy which will be designed to frustrate his plan and force him to abandon it. Unless the commander has great confidence in himself, he will almost certainly change his plan at the wrong moment.

Another reason why a commander needs self-confidence is so that he can change his plan when he does need to do so, or take such other action relevant to the handling of the battle, such as committing his reserve. In many ways it is more difficult for him to announce the fact that the plan, which he may have been pushing hard against strong opposition for some time, should now be altered, but there are times when changing circumstances require a change of

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plan, and a commander needs self-confidence if he is to take the right action at the right moment.

As a rule, self-confidence develops naturally in a person who knows his job thoroughly and who has an abundance of energy and courage. It will be rapidly enhanced by success, but is naturally liable to decline in adversity.

The next two characteristics that a commander needs can be taken together. They are the ability to make decisions and the determination to get them carried out, despite opposition from friend or foe. It is extremely difficult to explain the intensity of the pressures that can be exerted on a commander during operations and only the most determined person can overcome them to the extent necessary for achieving his purpose. Certainly the pressures that can be exerted on officers in other positions, or on people in civilian life for that matter, can be considerable. For example, they can be threatened with loss of livelihood or tempted by the prospect of achievement, gain, or happiness and they, too, can feel hemmed in by many pressures bearing down on them at the same moment. But never can they be subjected to the same intensity of pressure as the operational commander who, surrounded by uncertainty and sometimes in conditions of danger or gross discomfort, has to take decisions of the gravest consequence concerning the lives of his men and himself and the safety of his country, and see that they are implemented.

But although only the most determined person can resist the pressures likely to be imposed on him, he has got to do so without becoming inflexible or obstinate. To some people obstinacy may appear as a characteristic in its own right, but it is in fact an intellectual failing or an error of judgement since it involves sticking to an intention or plan after new evidence, or changed circumstances, indicate that an alteration is needed. But the mere fact that a large number of people think that a commander should do something different does not necessarily mean that he should, since he may be right and they may be wrong. If he is right he is determined;

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if he is wrong he is obstinate. It is also worth remembering that flexibility can become vacillation just as easily as determination can become obstinacy. Of the two, vacillation is more common and more dangerous.

From a military point of view, an important aspect of determination is ensuring that orders and instructions, once issued, are obeyed and do not become a basis for discussion. Once a commander is established and successful there is unlikely to be any problem, but initially there may be one or two of his subordinates who out of vanity or some other perverseness will not go along with him. As soon as they are identified they should be disposed of in such a way as to discourage further dissent. Although operational commanders, like other people, have to make the best use of the human resources available to them and can ill afford to get rid of someone with special skills or a powerful following, they cannot under any circumstances stand for resistance to their will from their own subordinates and must rapidly get rid of anyone they cannot convert: they will get quite enough resistance from the enemy. A commander who lacks determination in this is sure to fail.

Not all of a commander's dealings are with his subordinates and the business of pursuing his aim will inevitably involve a certain amount of negotiation. In a counter-insurgency or peace-keeping situation particularly, this will amount to a large proportion of his business and the conduct of these negotiations and dealings calls for a high degree of determination if any coherent plan is to be pursued. Certainly flexibility is needed as well, but it is as important for a commander to be able to explain his own ideas and plans as it is to fall in with those of the other groups involved. Even if the governmental structure is such that he finds himself supporting a team effort rather than taking the lead himself, he will almost certainly be the person who ensures that a concerted plan is made and adhered to. He will at the very least have to remind the politicians that constant fluctuations in the plan to suit political convenience can only result in failure.

It is difficult to know how a man can acquire the extreme

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degree of determination and decisiveness needed, if he is by nature diffident and desirous of accommodating the justifiable aspirations of his fellow men. All that can be said is that he will not succeed without doing so and that if he believes that doing the job well is in the interests of his fellow countrymen, he will overcome his scruples and get on with it.

An officer who knows his job thoroughly and who is energetic, courageous, confident, determined and decisive should have little difficulty in inspiring confidence in his men, which itself is one of the most essential parts of a commander's task. Some would say that it was the most important part, because it is the men who do the fighting and unless they are in the right frame of mind nothing will succeed. By far the best way of inspiring confidence is to have a record of past success, but no commander can be successful before he starts. Until then he must find other ways of inspiring confidence: such as by demonstrating that he knows his job and that he is setting about his task in a sensible way and that he is to be trusted. To some extent he can get this across by impressing his immediate subordinates who then pass their confidence in him on to their subordinates, and so on down the line. But a commander should also be seen by his men so that he can impress them at first hand, preferably by telling them what they will have to do and why and by making them realize that they are 'in with a chance'. Although an element of theatricality may be legitimate in this business, it is usually unnecessary, as soldiers the world over tend to see through it, which defeats the object of the exercise.

At this point it is necessary to discuss the question of trust, because trust is one of the ingredients of confidence. Many people feel that personal integrity and a high moral character based on firm religious belief are essential in an operational commander and there are some practical reasons why this should be so. For example, men are not likely to trust a commander with their most precious possession, their lives, unless they have faith in him and are convinced that he will not sacrifice them to further his own personal ambition. A

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commander's superiors, colleagues and allies also need to be convinced that his actions are not based on such considerations. Many may also feel that a man of sound moral character is more likely to stand up to the strains of operational command than an adventurer. Unfortunately, history does not bear this out and some of the best operational commanders have been thoroughly unscrupulous rascals.

As an example it is only necessary to mention Napoleon who is generally considered to have been an outstanding commander, but who was totally immoral and who allowed nothing to stand in the way of his own personal desire for power and glory and who never hesitated to sacrifice his men's lives to this end. None the less he managed to square his allies by persuading them that it was in their interest to go along with him and he dazzled his soldiers with his success and with the spoils of war that he was so often able to bestow upon them, so that they happily followed him and in many cases remained proud of having done so for the rest of their lives. The unfortunate fact is that men will follow a successful commander regardless of his moral character, once he has established a record of success. Integrity is highly desirable and is needed to ensure that men are led in the right direction, but some men can exercise operational command successfully without it, although governments would be unwise to entrust large forces to their charge, if they could possibly achieve success by any other means.

It can be seen that an operational commander must be a person who knows his job thoroughly and can think with absolute clarity. He must also be possessed of the characteristics discussed in this chapter and be a person who, having confidence in himself, is able to inspire it in others.

Although not all men are capable of acquiring these qualities to the required extent, history shows unequivocally that they can be found in people of very different types. For example, they can be genial or reserved, short or tall, good-looking or ugly, rich or poor. Furthermore, although they cannot be stupid or they would never be able to learn the job

sufficiently well, they can be well educated or scarcely educated at all in a formal sense and they can come from any level of society. In view of the difficulty of finding people capable of acquiring the essential qualities, it is fortunate that they can be developed in such widely differing types of person. But despite the lessons of history, it is not unusual to find commanders who try to develop superficial qualities that they do not need, simply because they feel that there is a stereotype image of a commander to which they should try and conform.

In the last resort what is required of a commander is that he can put his men into an operation in the most favourable way possible, knowing that anything can happen, but confident that he is in the best possible position to exploit such opportunities as may arise in order to achieve his aim. If he can do that, there is no need to bother about external appearances.

When it comes to finding such people there is one major difficulty to be overcome. This is to find a man old enough to have gained sufficient knowledge and experience and yet young enough to have the drive and energy needed and whose determination and decisiveness has not been eroded by the tolerance which comes from the passing of the years. It is very much in a country's interest to overcome this difficulty and produce capable operational commanders. If it fails to do so, it will find its armies being managed rather than commanded, which has in the past tended to result in excessive concern for the accumulation of resources, both human and material, at the expense of working out how to make the best use of them.

Note

i Martin Van Crefeld, *Commanders in War*, Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 270.

SUPPORT

The purpose of this chapter is to identify the qualities required by those whose job it is to support the operational commanders, either directly as senior members of their staffs, or indirectly as officers in the training or administrative machine.

It has been shown that the qualities needed by a commander are that he should know his job thoroughly and that he should be possessed of certain characteristics to an exceptional degree, namely energy, courage, determination, the ability to make decisions and the ability to inspire confidence. It is now necessary to see the extent to which senior staff officers in the headquarters of field army formations need these qualities and to examine whether there are other qualities they need to develop.

In order to do this, it is first necessary to understand the role of a senior staff officer. Within the field army, staffs exist solely to assist commanders with the carrying out of their tasks. They do so by helping them to make their plans and by taking from their shoulders the mechanics of putting their plans into effect. Where a large force is concerned, the headquarters staff is of necessity a highly complex organization and one that consists of many staff officers together with their transport, communications and administration.

The way in which staffs are organized varies from army to army and from time to time. Sometimes the heads of the main staff divisions such as operations, logistics and personnel, are each responsible separately to the commander, with one of

their number being detailed to co-ordinate work across the whole spectrum. At other times there is one chief staff officer responsible to the commander for the working of the whole staff. In either case the work of the staff is of fundamental importance to the success of the enterprise, since no commander on his own could cope with the extent or complexity of modern war. This complexity has been brought about, not only by the great proliferation of weapons systems and therefore of the different sorts of units and formations involved, but also because of the even greater proliferation of communications facilities and data-storage systems which have in turn immeasurably increased the amount of information arriving in a headquarters, all of which has to be sifted and considered by the staff.

The work of the staff depends greatly on the efficiency of the senior staff officers in it, any of whom may be called on to take decisions on behalf of the commander, in addition to those that he has to take on his own behalf, either because the power to do so in specific areas has been delegated to him in advance, or because the commander cannot be contacted at a particular moment and the decision will not wait. A senior staff officer is therefore a man of considerable importance in his own right.

There can be no doubt that a staff officer must know his job and, as with a commander, this consists of being able to think clearly while at the same time having a good store of knowledge and experience. In terms of clarity of thought, the same thought process and the same method of verbal and written expression of the conclusions reached will suit both the commander and the staff officer.

When it comes to knowledge, both the commander and the senior staff officer need a common stock of basic military facts covering procedures, personalities and the capabilities of the main weapons and equipment. But whereas the commander is largely thinking in terms of preparing his men to fight, developing concepts designed to achieve his tactical aim and adjusting his arrangements as operations unfold, the staff

officer is working out detailed plans for putting the concepts into effect and arranging for people to combine in order to implement the plans. For this reason both the commander and his senior staff officers need additional knowledge not required by each other. Senior staff officers, like commanders, do not need to carry a great mass of detailed information in their heads because they can always get it from their staff branches. But they do need to have sufficient facts at their fingertips to enable them to discuss events with their commander and to be able to follow the way he is thinking: they have to be completely 'in his mind'. They also have to have the store of knowledge needed to enable them to carry out discussions with representatives from other headquarters. Finally, of course, they must know exactly which of their own staff branches has the detailed information that they may want at short notice.

When comparing the experience that a senior staff officer needs with that needed by a commander, a number of points stand out. The first is the obvious one: that as their jobs are different, they need different experience to prepare themselves. The second is that the experience that a staff officer gets from training exercises is more valuable in preparing him for his wartime function than that gained by a commander, because the staff officer is dealing with real situations. For example, the commander is having to imagine the effect of enemy artillery and working out what he would do about it, whereas the staff officer is handling actual movement or making a real plan based on the commander's interpretation of the exercise scenario, which has to be written on real paper and put across on real communications circuits.

At the same time there is much less scope for a staff officer to gain experience by the study of past events, since historians seldom record the minutiae of staff activity to the same extent as they record the activities of commanders. Occasionally they do so, as, for example, when a particular disaster can be attributed to faulty staff work. The charge of the light brigade at Balaclava is a case in point. But the application of principle to the achievement of a given aim in a given set of

circumstances is not so relevant to staff experience as it is to command.

At this point it is worth mentioning the extent to which experience as a staff officer is useful for preparing a man to be a commander, and in this respect it is clear that direct experience of what goes on within a headquarters at staff level must be of some use in giving an officer an idea of what it is sensible to expect a staff to be able to do. The experience would also help him to judge the efficiency of his staff when he had one, and help him to pin-point shortcomings. Certainly, as a staff officer, he could pick up valuable second-hand experience of command by watching his commander at work, especially if the force was involved in operations at the time. On the other hand, there are often better ways of preparing an officer for command than by employing him as a staff officer. Much depends on the particular staff job concerned: for example, being the chief staff officer in a small formation headquarters would provide valuable experience for a young officer who was being prepared for a senior command appointment in later life, whereas being tucked away in a large headquarters with several layers of staff officers above him, would be of much less value.

In summary, it is just as important for a staff officer to know his job thoroughly as it is for a commander. But as the job is different, so the knowledge and experience that each need are to some extent different, although there is common ground with particular reference to the need for clear thinking. The next subject for examination is a comparison of the characteristics required by staff officers as opposed to commanders.

The first characteristic considered for a commander was energy. So far as staff officers are concerned physical energy is less often needed, because there is not the same compulsion to be on the move. Mental energy is however important since the job consists not only of constant attention to day-to-day business, but also of looking ahead, which can only be achieved by a degree of original and constructive thinking. A

senior staff officer during operations is always beset by the problem of how to handle current matters while at the same time ensuring that he is ahead of future ones. The mental activity of the senior staff officer has, therefore, got to be almost as continuous as that of the commander, although the originality of his thinking may not be so important. On the other hand, commanders are sometimes appointed who are none too strong themselves in this field, and so rely on their staffs to do the forward thinking for them.

There is no doubt that mental energy is an essential qualification for a senior staff officer, particularly as the work he does is far less stimulating than that performed by the commander: it just goes on and on. But it is a form of mental energy slightly different from the energy that the commander needs. Perhaps it could best be described as mental stamina.

The next characteristic considered was courage. Once again the need for physical courage in a staff officer is considerably less than it is with a commander, because he is less frequently obliged to expose himself to direct enemy action, although in many cases he will be carrying on his activities under the threat of long-range weapons and bombing. On the other hand, senior staff officers often need a good measure of moral courage in order to take decisions for their commander, or to press unpopular views on their commander, or to handle subordinate commanders in the commander's absence. But few of these situations provide such heavy demands as those that bear on the commanders themselves, so it is probably fair to say that moral courage is of slightly less importance for a staff officer than it is for a commander.

When it comes to determination, the same sort of picture emerges. A staff officer has to be persistent in enquiry and determined in pursuit of his business, or he will not get it done, but he is unlikely to face the same pressure of opposition as his commander and he can afford to be more supple and tolerant in his approach. It is in fact part of his job to look at alternatives to the course of action that his commander is pursuing, in order to be ready to discuss, or even suggest, them at the appropriate moment. Like courage, a staff officer

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needs a measure of determination, but it is not of prime importance to him.

The ability to make decisions is more important since staff officers have to make them all the time. First, they have to make decisions within their own jobs in order to conduct their business; for example, they have to decide on priorities of work and who does what among their subordinates. They also have to decide what to bring to their commander's attention and how they should do it. At a separate level they have to take decisions for their commander from time to time, as mentioned earlier. But although an indecisive staff officer is useless, staff officers usually have less important and difficult decisions to take than their commanders.

The last main attribute of a commander mentioned was the ability to inspire confidence among all ranks of the force. In this sense there is no such requirement placed on a staff officer, although staff officers have to be trusted by their commander and by their colleagues, and the senior ones have also to be trusted outside their headquarters by the commanders and staffs with whom they come in contact. But this is a totally different matter which calls for loyalty, good sense, integrity and a mastery of their jobs.

It can be seen that there is a considerable difference between the qualities needed by a staff officer and those needed by a commander. Whereas it is important for both parties to know their jobs, the jobs are very different.

In terms of personal characteristics, the difference is even more marked. Whereas some of those needed to a high degree by a commander are also needed to a lesser degree by a staff officer, others might even be a handicap in a staff officer, certainly if held at the same intensity, e.g. determination. Also a staff officer has to be largely anonymous, working behind the scenes for his commander, whereas the commander has to make himself known and trusted throughout the force, which requires a very different approach.

In fact, it could be said that the attributes of a senior staff officer are not greatly different from those needed by people

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who reach senior positions in many walks of life. Obviously the background knowledge required varies, but the ability to think clearly and the basic characteristics of hard work, administrative ability, integrity and flexibility are the same. For this reason a good senior staff officer can readily adapt to being a civil servant or take his place as a manager in industry or in some comparable activity.

By contrast there is nothing in civilian life that compares with operational command, and the man who wants to undertake such a function has to build up a collection of personal qualities to a degree of intensity which would be of little use to him in other spheres. Some of them might even make it difficult for him to combine with other people in any of the more normal occupations, until they were severely modified or at least concealed.

Somewhat naturally the educational system of most civilized countries is geared to the production of a proportion of senior administrators within its population. Such an educational background provides an adequate basis on which to build up useful staff officers. But as there is nothing in the civilian world to compare with operational command, it is not surprising that the army has little to build on when it takes delivery of a future commander from the educational system. It is a sobering thought that in order to preserve the security of the country, the army has to take a number of young men each year and inculcate into them certain qualities, some of which will be of little use to them in any other context, and develop them in an uncompromising fashion over an extended period just in case a few of the men concerned are needed to exercise command in war.

In any army there are bound to be many officers employed in the training organization, that is to say, in units whose special task it is to train recruits, or in schools and establishments which run courses for officers, non-commissioned officers and men in the skills that they will need when they join units or headquarters of the field army. The qualities which these officers need in order to do their jobs in the training

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organization, can be summarized as follows. First, they have to have a sound knowledge of whatever it is that they are trying to teach. This can be very specialized, such as how to handle a particular weapon or collection of weapons, or it can be fairly wide, as, for example, in the case of the instructors at a command and staff college. Second, they have to be able to think and express themselves clearly so as to be able to put their subject across effectively. It certainly helps to have had some field army experience of the subjects being taught and, of course, the officers concerned have to be able to inspire sufficient confidence in their students to carry conviction.

But, whereas knowledge of the job is necessary, the characteristics of the senior operational commander, such as courage and the ability to make decisions, are not required to any significant extent. Therefore, although some of the knowledge that an officer picks up when serving as an instructor in the training organization could be useful to him as an operational commander, he is unlikely to develop any of the characteristics, or pick up much of the experience, that he will need while serving in such an appointment.

At the same time the jobs themselves are of great importance, because they have a direct bearing on the state of readiness of the troops in the field army. Some of the most influential posts in the training organization should therefore be filled by people who have held command appointments in the field army, so that the necessary experience may be made available. It may on occasions be worth putting a commander who needs a break from operations into the training organization for a while, but if he is being prepared for a top operational command, he will not be able to stay there for long, because more valuable experience can be gained elsewhere.

In addition to the training organization, there are a large number of logistic and administrative units and establishments that exist to support the field army. They include stores, repair facilities, hospitals, transit units, family hostels, etc. Appointments within these units and establishments

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provide little useful experience for those aspiring to senior operational command, although they may well be worthwhile jobs in their own right; this entirely depends on whether the establishment concerned is providing a worthwhile service, which is not always the case since the administrative tail of an army often grows far too big especially in periods of prolonged operations. But, even if these jobs are of little use for preparing operational commanders, they may provide valuable experience for future logistic and administrative commanders and for staff officers in formation headquarters within the field army.

In short, although senior officers in the army's logistic and administrative units and establishments need specialist knowledge together with normal management and leadership skills, they do not need to be possessed of the particular attributes of the operational commander.

THE POLITICAL INTERFACE

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the qualities needed by two sets of people. First, the supreme commanders, theatre commanders and some commanders-in-chief who are not themselves directing operations. Second, the senior officers who work in a country's ministry of defence or equivalent organization. This chapter also examines whether commanders of varying sorts need qualities in addition to those that they need in war, in order to carry out their peacetime roles.

When considering the first of these groups, it is easy to be confused by terminology. The difficulty arises from the fact that the term commander-in-chief is sometimes used to describe a person who is not exercising the chief command, that is to say, he is not operating between the senior operational commanders and a country's defence ministry, or an alliance authority of some sort. For example, a supreme allied commander who obviously is exercising the chief command, may have contingents from several countries subordinate to him, the commanders of which may be called commanders-in-chief, merely because they have to be so designated in order to exercise the legal functions allotted to them by their country's legislature. But such people are usually used as operational commanders, rather than as commanders-in-chief, as is the case with the army group commanders in NATO's Central Region. This chapter does not apply to these people, who need the skills and

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characteristics of operational commanders as described in Chapters 5 and 6.

On other occasions the commander-in-chief may be the top operational commander in a campaign as well as being the link between a defence ministry and the operational formations. This sometimes happens if a commander-in-chief is only concerned with one campaign, and does not wish to delegate operational command to a subordinate. This would have been a normal practice in historical times and sometimes happens today. These people also need the skills and characteristics of the operational commanders.

Another group sometimes known as commanders-in-chief are the head single-service officers in a tri-service theatre commander's headquarters. These people may be acting as deputy supreme commanders, with a special land, naval or air interest, in which case they are intermediaries above the operational commanders and are relevant in the context of this chapter. On other occasions they may be specifically designated as land force commander (or air or naval force commander as the case may be), in which case they are likely to be operational commanders; but even that is not certain, so great are the variety of arrangements made in order to satisfy political sensibilities.

In any case it is the function of the officers that matters rather than their designation, and the discussion in this chapter will therefore centre round the qualities needed by the supreme commanders, theatre commanders and commanders-in-chief whose role is primarily of an intermediary rather than an operational nature. For convenience sake in this book they will all be referred to as superior commanders.

The main tasks of a superior commander in practice are to get hold of resources, to allocate them between the various forces operating in the theatre and to work out with the relevant defence ministry, or alliance headquarters, the tasks that have to be done and the timing of them. He is therefore involved in a constant balancing act between commitments and resources. In addition, he has to absorb the political pressure, so that

his operational commanders can put their plans into effect without undue interruption. With his headquarters and base installations he should also be able to handle much of the routine administration of the forces in his theatre, thus relieving his operational commanders of the burden and enabling them to keep down the size of their own headquarters. In the last resort his business is to put his operational commanders into the ring with the best possible chance of success.

In comparing the skills needed for such a task with those of an operational commander, it is quickly apparent that there is a close parallel, resulting from the fact that the dividing line between their range of activities is so thin. Certainly, knowledge and experience are both required, although the knowledge itself has to embrace a wider canvas, that is to say, it may be more concerned with the strategic interdependence of several campaigns than with the detailed tactical problems of any one of them. None the less he will only be able to make the proper decisions at this level, if he has a thorough understanding of the problems and circumstances facing each of his operational commanders.

In terms of characteristics, the same sort of parallel applies. For example, a superior commander needs both physical and mental energy for the same reasons that an operational commander needs them, i.e. he has to travel endlessly and keep one jump ahead with his ideas. On the other hand, events move slightly slower in his world, as the issues tend to be more complicated, studies more detailed and the reaction time slightly longer. All the same, a great deal of energy is required.

So far as courage is concerned, there may be slightly less call for the physical variety, in so far as superior commanders tend to be further removed from the actual fighting most of the time. But there is certainly no lesser requirement for moral courage, since such people are endlessly being put under pressure and presented with the need to make decisions of the greatest significance. Certainly moral courage is often needed if they are to keep political pressure off the back of

operational commanders, which, as stated, is one of the most important aspects of their job and one that has great influence on success or failure in the field. History is full of examples of military disaster caused by political pressure being exerted on an operational commander to attack too soon, or to withdraw too late.

It is obvious from what has already been said that a superior commander has to be able to take frequent and difficult decisions. Possibly it may be a little easier for him to do so than it is for the operational commander, because of the longer period available to him for making up his mind. But this is a very marginal matter.

Determination is also required to a high degree, but once more it does not have to be displayed in quite so stark a fashion. Indeed, a greater degree of flexibility is almost sure to be necessary in order to take account of the way in which politicians work and to cater for the susceptibilities of allies. Fear of the enemy in the forward areas provides an incentive for co-operation that diminishes rapidly as the distance from the front increases. In consequence, a superior commander has to rely more on diplomacy than does an operational commander and this obliges him to conceal his determination, to some extent, under an apparent willingness to listen to the views of many extraneous people.

The ability to inspire confidence is naturally needed in a superior commander, but in a different way from the operational commander. The superior commander cannot as a rule influence the troops very directly himself; this is essentially the job of operational commanders. Superior commanders are much more concerned with gaining and retaining the confidence of political leaders and to a lesser extent of the government's top military advisers. They also have to have the confidence of their subordinate operational commanders. Success in inspiring confidence at this level requires rather a different approach from that used by operational commanders with their troops. A reputation helps, but, in addition, much depends on being known by as many of the influential people in the alliance or country concerned as possible, so that

they all feel in touch when a crisis occurs.

No comparison between a superior commander's job and that of the senior operational commanders working under him can be made that would hold good for all circumstances. Sometimes, no doubt, a superior commander may succeed in putting an operational commander into battle in such a strong position that only the most incompetent could fail. In other circumstances only a genius could succeed. But in terms of resources, countries are seldom able to provide more than is strictly necessary for success and it is therefore unusual for a superior commander to be able to wheedle a great surplus of capability for his operational commanders. This being the case, it is true to say that the operational commander's task of using the forces allocated to him successfully, is usually more difficult than the superior commander's job of getting hold of them in the first place and of ensuring that the operational commander can go ahead undisturbed by pressure from outside. In the last resort the important thing is to have a good combination of superior commander and operational commander, and to get it it may even be necessary to put a more capable commander under a less capable one. Such, after all, in the Second World War, were the teams that defeated Rommel and won the battle of El Alamein, (Montgomery working under Alexander) and turned the tide in Burma, (Slim under Giffard).

In terms of qualities, the important thing to remember is that both superior commanders and operational commanders are, as the term implies, commanders: as such they are solely responsible for all that goes on within their spheres of influence. Although the diplomatic skills required by the superior commander may resemble those needed by senior staff officers, the basic qualities required are those of a commander. Furthermore it is a great help for a superior commander to have had experience of operational command, because this enables him the more easily to appreciate the problems of his operational commanders and to defend them against outside pressures.

The last group of people to be considered are the senior

officers in a country's defence ministry whose job is to provide immediate advice to the politicians and then to put into effect the policy decided by them. These officers include the chief of the country's defence staff, and the heads of the individual services.

Once again both the terminology and the usage vary between one country and the next. For example, so far as terminology is concerned, the principal service adviser may be described as chief of defence, chief of the defence staff, inspector general of the armed forces or chairman of the chiefs of staff. So far as usage is concerned, there is also a number of variations. For example, in one country the principal service officer may be solely responsible to the defence secretary for all aspects of defence, whereas in another he may be responsible only for co-ordination and joint aspects of defence, leaving the heads of the services and of the principal departments to deal directly with the political leadership in their own field.

But regardless of terminology, or of the system employed, there is one thing that all developed countries in the modern world have in common, which is that politicians rather than military officers are ultimately responsible for defence policy. Even if one or more of the senior politicians, such as the head of state, or the chief minister, or the minister dealing with defence, happens to be a military officer, it is as politicians rather than as servicemen that they take responsibility for defence policy. The role of serving officers in a country's defence ministry is therefore essentially one of providing advice and assistance to the political leadership: it is the government that is responsible for the policy.

At this juncture it may be worth digressing for a moment to try and pin down the meaning of the word policy, since confusion is sometimes occasioned by people who use the word without understanding exactly what it means. In effect policy means plan, although the word is usually used to describe a general long-term plan designed to guide the actions of subordinates, rather than a collection of detailed instructions. (*The Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines policy as a

course or general plan of action to be adopted by government, party, person, etc.)

On this basis it can be seen that a country's defence policy is the overall plan of defence which must include not only the allocation of tasks to the superior commanders mentioned earlier, but also the arrangements for raising, equipping, training and administering the armed forces and the civilians who directly support them. All those charged with putting parts of the country's defence policy into effect may therefore be described as executing it. This includes many different people from the superior commanders who may have hundreds of thousands of men under their command, to individuals in charge of minor agencies directly responsible to the country's ministry of defence.

But governments are not the only people to formulate policies. A superior commander must have a general long-term plan for carrying out the tasks allocated to him in the country's defence policy and this, therefore, becomes the policy for his command or theatre of operations. It will include instructions to his principal subordinates who will thus find themselves executing the superior commander's policy. The same thing happens at every level of command right down to units and sub-units, so that even battalion and company commanders have to formulate a policy on which to base their detailed instructions. In other words, making policy is a function of command at every executive level from the government downwards.

Returning to a country's defence ministry, the task of the senior military officers working in it is, as mentioned earlier, to help the government determine its defence policy and then to ensure that it is put into effect, at any rate as far as it affects the services. Thus, in theory at any rate, it could be said that these senior officers do for the political leadership what a headquarters staff does for a commander. In practice there is a major difference, because commanders are trained in the business of war whereas members of the government, as a rule, are not. None the less the comparison is true in terms of responsibility, which is why in many countries the senior

service officer in the defence ministry is described as a chief of defence staff, rather than as a commander.

Special mention needs to be made of the senior naval, army and air force officers in each country's defence ministry, since, in addition to their staff function, they are usually designated as head of their service. Such a term is used to indicate that their role includes a responsibility for the general efficiency and well-being of their service, without implying a command responsibility which would interfere with the constitutional relationship which exists between a government and its superior commanders. As staff officers, they may, of course, be involved in passing detailed instructions arising out of government defence policy to superior commanders, but as heads of their services their job is more closely concerned with the selection of officers for the most important appointments and with ensuring that doctrine is being formulated, and training carried out, in a sensible manner. But their most important role, particularly in wartime, is to ensure that instructions issued to superior commanders make sense in terms of the capabilities of their own services. They have to operate as 'friends at court' for superior commanders, and at the same time ensure that these people understand and comply with the spirit as well as the letter of the country's defence policy.

With this background, it is now possible to compare in outline the qualities and characteristics required by these senior officers with those of the operational commanders.

The first quality on the operational commander's check-list was knowing the job, broken down into clear thinking, knowledge and experience. In a very general sense this still applies even in the defence ministry, but the sort of knowledge and the type of experience needed are so different as to make the comparison indistinct. In practice, although these officers need a background of normal military knowledge, they also need a wide understanding of world affairs, current politics and of the way in which the government machinery works. They should also have personal experience of the government machine as well as knowledge, and although

they will inevitably pick some up, if employed as superior commanders, it will certainly help them if they have held an appointment in their defence ministry at some stage.

The characteristics required by these senior officers have little in common with those needed by operational commanders, although a comparison of a sort can be made. For example, they need plenty of mental energy, much of which gets expended in reacting to the wishes of the politicians, rather than in initiating action on their own behalf: in this respect there is a parallel with senior staff officers who also find themselves reacting to the directions of their commander as well as initiating work of their own. They need moral courage in order to make unpopular recommendations to the politicians, and to stand up for the commanders in the field and they need to be determined and decisive in the same way that a senior staff officer needs to have these qualities and for the same reasons.

They also have to gain and retain the confidence both of the politicians and of the commanders in the field; no easy feat. But the way in which they do this has more in common with the methods used by staff officers to gain the trust of their commanders than with the way in which a commander gains the confidence of his force. Thus, although these senior officers have to become widely known among the leadership of the country and alliance, they have to do this without detracting from the status of the political leadership and without reducing the prestige of commanders in the field. In war they occupy an intermediate position between the major military commanders who have to be exposed to the full glare of public awareness and the total anonymity of civil servants.

The characteristics that they most require are those that enable them to influence great events rather than to direct lesser ones. They need breadth of vision and the ability to persuade as well as to compel. They need patience as well as determination and stamina as much as energy. In effect they have to combine the qualities of the superior commander with those of the senior staff officer. They need to understand the uncompromising nature of operational command as well

as the Byzantine workings of the government machine.

Not surprisingly, it is difficult to find individuals who combine these very different attributes. It is even more difficult to give them the experience they need to operate effectively in both spheres, because of the time it takes to amass it. Ideally, in peace, it is the natural staff officer, rather than commander, who is best qualified, because most of the subjects with which he has to deal concern resources, administration and organization rather than the conduct of operations. In war this ceases to be the case, and a man with the strength of purpose and authority of a commander is needed in order to inspire confidence. But, as mentioned earlier, in the nuclear age of surprise attacks and short wars, it is impracticable to make a change at the last moment. This means either that a natural staff officer has got to be given command experience at a high level to fit him for one of the senior posts in the defence ministry, or that only senior commanders should be employed in them.

The disadvantage of the first of these alternatives is that if a war comes suddenly, while one of these people is occupying a senior command position, the force that he is commanding will not be able to operate to the best of its ability. Also, the appointment is needed in order to prepare someone else to operate properly as a commander in war. The disadvantage of the second alternative is that it might prevent the most effective man doing the job in peacetime, and periods of peace usually last much longer than all-out wars. Furthermore, in peace, it is the senior service officers in a defence ministry who have the greatest influence, because their success, or otherwise, in persuading the government to provide adequate resources, is the foundation of all else in the defence field. During the period when no operations are going on, the importance of those who have to be ready to direct them naturally takes second place. The dilemma of ensuring that men are adequately prepared to fill these jobs, without jeopardizing the preparation of operational commanders, will be more fully examined in the third part of the book.

The last part of this chapter examines the question of peacetime commanders, and this applies both to superior commanders and to those concerned with the direction of operations. Clearly, an officer who lacked some of the skills and characteristics required in war could command successfully in peacetime. For example, command in peacetime requires a lesser outlay of energy and makes few demands on a person's physical courage. But the point has already been made that it is no good giving a man command of a force in peace if he cannot command it in war, because there is no time to change him for someone else on the outbreak of hostilities. The question is whether a man with the qualities needed to cope in war can do the job in peace.

There are really two aspects to this problem which are closely related. The first concerns the extent to which a commander should compromise the results of his thought processes and tone down the intensity of his energy and his determination to stick to his plans, in the interests of fitting in with day-to-day political manoeuvring and also with the generally less taut attitudes of his colleagues. It may even be desirable for him to temper the severity with which he would deal with the shortcomings of his subordinates, on the grounds that their failures are not so dangerous when there is no enemy to take advantage of them. The second aspect is whether he needs to practise qualities such as diplomacy and tolerance to a much higher degree in peace than in war in order to conduct his affairs successfully.

A number of points are relevant when considering these two aspects of the problem. The first is that the difference between peace and war is a difference of circumstance. If a person has been brought up to realize that his job as a commander is, in the last resort, to use his resources in accordance with the circumstances, for the purpose of achieving a given aim, he should be capable of adjusting his own behaviour to take account of the changed circumstances even to the extent of adopting a more relaxed attitude to events when the circumstances demand it.

But, at the same time, it has to be realized that a comman-

der, even in peace, must be prepared to bring to the attention of the government the effect that outside influences are likely to have on the readiness of his force to undertake its war role. Inevitably the senior officers in a country's defence ministry have got to bargain discreetly with politicians, in order to get hold of resources. It is the job of senior commanders, while understanding the necessity for this manoeuvring, to represent the ill-effects that such bargains may have on the ability of their forces to carry out their wartime roles. Indeed, it is often unhelpful, as well as dangerous, for them not to do so, as their adamant opposition can strengthen the hand of the services in the defence ministry.

In short, the skills and characteristics that enable a commander to do his job in war, are those best suited to his true peacetime role, despite the discomfort that may be experienced by superiors and colleagues alike, if the commander concerned fails to adjust his behaviour to the circumstances of peace. At any rate it is much safer from the country's point of view to employ such a person, than to use a more amenable man only to find that he is of little use when most needed.

In summarizing the conclusions reached in the second part of this book, it can be said first that there is little difficulty in preparing people to fill the many posts in the training and administrative organizations that are needed to support the army in the field. They can be found from the many good and useful middle-piece commanders and staff officers who are not likely to be wanted either as senior operational commanders or senior staff officers.

Effective senior staff officers are far more difficult to produce as they have to possess knowledge, experience and a number of characteristics that develop only with time.

The very senior officers who occupy the top posts in a country's defence ministry are a special breed who not only have to acquire the qualities of senior staff officers with experience of working in the governmental machine, but who must also fully understand the problems of superior and operational commanders. Producing such people is a major

problem which has an important bearing on the process of preparing senior operational commanders.

But regardless of the difficulties of finding officers to fill all of these supporting appointments, it is none the less a greater problem to produce men with the qualities required of a senior operational commander. There are two main reasons for this in a very general sense, the first of which is that the qualities they need are so different from those required in other walks of life, as mentioned earlier.

The second reason is that operational commanders have to acquire the knowledge and experience that they need before the intense energy which they also need begins to seep away with age. This factor is further complicated, too, because the age and energy factor varies not only in terms of the difference between one man and another, but also between one type of war and another. Thus nothing could be more exacting than the sort of highly-mobile armoured and mechanized operations described in Chapter 2. Only the fittest and most robust of men could be expected to direct them successfully. Fortunately such operations cannot continue for more than a short time without a break. More limited conventional operations could last for longer, but the advantage of the intensity being less would be offset by the longer time that they lasted, so that a fit and robust person would still be needed to direct them. Counter-insurgency operations often go on for years, but in this case the pressure on the commanders is usually considerably less, although still far in excess of anything encountered in peacetime. Furthermore, the job still calls for an immense outlay of mental and physical energy. Another variable in the equation is the time that it takes to gain the knowledge and experience related to each type of war both singly and collectively.

Decisions regarding the speed at which officers earmarked to direct operations should proceed through the lower ranks, have to be made by considering these factors and balancing them against the likelihood of the different sorts of operation occurring in the case of each country. Thus, if a country is clear that its priority is to be ready to fight the all-out

armoured and mechanized war, it must reconcile itself to running a system under which even the most senior operational command is completed by the time a man has reached his middle forties. If priority is given to being prepared for the less intense types of war, while still being capable of taking part in all-out war up to a point, the age of the most senior commanders might be extended by a few years.

In the third part of this book an attempt will be made to indicate how the business of producing senior operational commanders should be approached, bearing in mind priorities regarding the sort of war likely to be encountered and also the need to reconcile the production of men capable of directing operations with that of producing those required to fill all the other jobs mentioned earlier.

Parts

A STRUCTURE FOR COMMAND

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

History indicates that, with some notable exceptions, military operations have usually been badly directed throughout the ages. This fact on its own makes it worth considering whether traditional methods of preparing officers for the command of troops in war should be reappraised. A more important reason for carrying out such a reappraisal is the fact that war has changed its nature beyond measure in the last forty years, partly because of the advent of nuclear weapons and partly because of the way in which information has proliferated and public awareness increased, following the spread of wireless and television.

Clearly there are variations in the type of commander required by one country as opposed to another, based on the national characteristics of the men they have got to lead, the circumstances of the country itself and the sort of war that it must be prepared to fight. So far as the third of these considerations is concerned, it is not enough to prepare for the most likely sort of war, since a less likely form may be more important should it arise. In practice it is necessary for a country to produce commanders capable of directing any sort of operation that the country might find itself conducting. Certainly, if a country has paid vast sums to be equipped to take part in a particular sort of battle, its commanders should be capable of directing the sort of operations in which it could be used.

In a general sense it can be said that armoured and mechanized operations, fought between nuclear-armed, or backed,

alliances, demand the fittest and most robust commanders, because of the likely pace of the operations and because of the strain that the magnitude of the stakes would put on those directing them. Such operations need to be directed by determined, knowledgeable and experienced men. The direction of counter-insurgency operations, which also needs men who know the job thoroughly and who have the strength of character to see them through, makes lesser demands on a commander's endurance and physique, but possibly greater ones on his intellect. There is a whole range of operations between these two extremes, that would make differing demands on commanders in terms of fitness, knowledge, experience and skills.

The first two parts of this book show that operational commanders, especially the most senior, need a number of qualities which are hard to develop and easily eroded by time. The purpose of Part 3 is to show the extent to which the methods of selecting and preparing operational commanders, which exist in most developed countries today, need to be altered to meet current requirements and to indicate the effect that such a change is likely to have on the way in which officers' careers are structured. The subject will be covered in two chapters, the first of which will deal with the main considerations affecting the issue, while the second outlines some possible alternatives and points out a practical solution.

The first point to be considered is the question of age related to command. The age at which men can continue to command effectively during intense operations must govern the way in which careers are worked out, despite the fact that the majority of officers, i.e. staff officers, officers working in the training and administrative machine, and even senior officers in a defence ministry, can all continue to work effectively at a greater age.

Individuals vary considerably in the length of time it takes for their powers to become eroded. For example, Wellington, aged forty-six at the battle of Waterloo, was still at his peak, whereas Napoleon, who was the same age, was past his

prime, possibly because he had been shouldering greater responsibilities for a longer period, but possibly because he was constitutionally weaker. In general, an exceptionally dedicated person can keep going for longer than the normal person, although he may merely succeed in driving himself to death: there is little predictable about it. Of course, a commander's effectiveness is not solely related to the extent to which his qualities have been eroded by time, since an experienced and successful man whose qualities are starting to fade may still be more use than a less experienced one whose energy is unimpaired.

With these uncertainties, all that can be hoped for is a system that keeps preparing the best men for command and then shunts them into other fields as soon as they start to decline or reach their ceiling. By this means, whenever a war starts, fully qualified men who are ready to stand up to the pace of battle will be in post, and whenever they become useless, others will be ready to replace them. All this is easier to arrange in theory than in practice.

Because of the differences between one person and another, it is important not to work the system rigidly on the basis of age, although it is desirable that a commander should not be too much older than his immediate subordinates, or his knowledge and experience of their problems may become out of date. On the other hand, it does not matter if a commander is younger than his subordinates, providing that he has the necessary knowledge, experience and characteristics to control them. History is full of examples of successful teams of this sort. For example, Wolfe at Quebec was younger than all three of his subordinate commanders and both Napoleon and Wellington were younger than most of their principal lieutenants throughout their campaigns. Even in the Second World War there were plenty of examples of such relationships: Mountbatten in South-East Asia, Eisenhower in Europe and Alexander in the Middle East were all younger than many of their subordinate commanders.

What matters is that a man must be free to go from one command to the next as soon as he acquires the knowledge

and experience to do so, providing that his characteristics are developing in the right way. In short, he should be allowed to take a command as soon as he is ready for it, providing there is a vacancy, and to continue moving on for as long as his powers last, or until a better man appears. At every level he must be assessed to see whether he is worth propelling on to the next command, or whether he should be used to fill some other job.

But although it is important not to be rigid about age, or use it as a qualification for promotion to the next rank, it is none the less necessary to have some general ideas as to the ages at which a normal person is likely to become too old to direct certain sorts of operation effectively. This has to be established in order to provide a framework for the organization of careers. Unfortunately there is no scientific way of working out maximum ages which must remain largely a matter of opinion, based on experience, aided by such guide-lines as can be dimly discerned from an examination of the events that have taken place in different parts of the world in recent years. In this connection it must be remembered that there has been no instance of a major war between fully-developed countries equipped with modern weapons since the Arab-Israeli contest in 1973, and a lot of new equipment has been brought into use since then.

One relevant factor in working out ages, is that the size of a force and therefore the rank of its operational commander is likely to vary according to the type of operation being considered. For example, a major clash between armoured and mechanized forces is likely to involve far more men than the normal, limited war operation or counter-insurgency campaign, so that the man responsible for directing operations will probably be one or two ranks senior to the commanders in the other two situations. This means that in an army where armoured and mechanized war is a major priority, some officers have to be pushed into the highest ranks at a younger age than would be necessary if this commitment did not exist. Conversely, armies that do not count large-scale mechanized war among their commitments

can afford to employ their senior commanders to a greater age.

All things considered and as a very rough guide, it is the author's opinion that a senior operational commander directing full-scale armoured and mechanized operations should not exceed forty-five years of age. This would seem to reflect the experience of the Israelis in 1967 and 1973 and is about the best estimate that can be made at the moment. On this basis, corps and divisional commanders would normally be in their early forties and brigade commanders in their late thirties.

So far as limited war and insurgency are concerned, based on the considerations outlined in previous chapters, it would probably be safe to say that the senior officer directing operations could be as much as fifty years old if necessary.

If these figures are accepted, it can be seen that a country which wants to be prepared to take part in all-out armoured and mechanized warfare must base its officer career structure on the age limitations relevant to that form of war, which is the worst case. Furthermore, officers appointed to command formations must be qualified to conduct all the other types of operation as well, because it is not always possible to know in advance how a formation will be used. For example, in Israel the same formations that are helping to control unrest in the occupied territories must be ready at a moment's notice to repulse an external attack. Should their commanders be able to conduct only one of these sorts of operation efficiently, there could be a disaster when they found themselves directing the other sort of operation. Similar considerations apply in other countries where commanders earmarked to take part in limited wars around the world could find their formations switched to participate in a full-scale war in Europe, or, in different circumstances, the limited war which they were prepared to undertake could de-escalate into insurgency. In short, officer career structures must be based on the worst case in terms of age related to commitments, and in terms of commanders being able to direct all the types of operation relevant to that country's army.

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Having established a very rough top limit in terms of age, the next factor to consider is the problem of providing people with the knowledge and experience that they need, in the time available. For this, a system is needed that not only posts people from job to job so that they pick up the right knowledge and experience, but which also takes advantage of experience gained as a result of unforeseen circumstances. For example, one officer may be lucky enough to take part in an unexpected operation and gain experience that fits him for promotion ahead of the man who has been restricted to training. Another officer may have been sent to an operational theatre to get experience, only to find that there is a cease-fire and that he is confined to commanding garrison troops in a place where even training is impossible. Although luck plays a part in this, it is the value of the experience that counts. A desire to be fair to the less fortunate must not hold up the man who is ready to go on.

It is more difficult to work out the value of jobs, other than command jobs, for preparing men to command. As mentioned, some staff jobs, especially those in operational theatres, provide better experience than command appointments in less interesting places. In the junior ranks, particularly, they are important in showing how different sorts of unit, such as infantry, armour and artillery have to combine on the battlefield, but their value is dependent on the right sort of posts being available early enough. Thus, whereas it would almost always be beneficial for a young major to act as chief of staff of a brigade just before or just after commanding a company or squadron, it would be a waste of time for him to hold such an appointment by the time he was qualified to command a battalion. The same applies at the higher levels, so that being chief of staff of a division would provide useful experience for a young lieutenant-colonel, but would be of little value to a colonel. Of course, some regard has to be paid to the interests of the commander of the formation who might prefer to have a more experienced chief of staff, but in the past it has often been found that a star on the way up makes as good a chief of

staff as an experienced man who has moved out of the mainstream. In any case priority must be given to producing the best commanders as early as possible, and this may on occasions mean that an important staff job gets done slightly less well.

Getting useful experience by serving on the staff of a more senior commander also applies to working in a country's defence ministry, as a person who is likely to hold a top operational command needs to know how things are managed there. It is considerations of this sort that justify switching officers between command and staff, a system that is used in many armies. But despite the advantages, the system is usually abused, for a number of reasons that are not concerned with giving future commanders the best preparation for their jobs. These will be discussed later.

The next consideration is the time that potential senior commanders should spend in the appointments that they hold during their careers, including those held on the staff and in the training or administrative part of the army. Officers also have to undergo training courses, some of which may last for as much as a year or two. The time that they spend in each job, or undergoing courses, naturally affects the total number of appointments that they can hold. Two factors should determine the length of time that an officer should spend in an appointment: first, the time needed to give him the best preparation for subsequent jobs, and second, the time needed to get the job done properly. In each case the answer is bound to represent a compromise between these factors, but every effort should be made to ensure that other less legitimate considerations are kept out of the calculation.

When working out how long to leave an officer in a job, it is worth remembering that a man can take over a staff job, and become useful at doing it, more quickly than he can become useful as a commander. This is because of the time it takes a commander to travel round his area and get to know the people with whom he has to work. An exception is that those in their first appointment in a defence ministry need time to discover how government machinery works. Usually

a person can suck the knowledge and experience that he needs more quickly from a staff job than from a command job.

So far in this chapter, the matter has been looked at purely from the point of producing commanders, on the assumption that all other jobs can be adequately filled by officers who fall out of the command race. There are sure to be plenty of such people because, as a rule of thumb, only one in three commanders at any level are needed to command at the next higher level. The reason for this is that formations usually consist of three smaller ones - three battalions in a brigade, three brigades in a division, etc. Furthermore, there are many officers in logistic and administrative units who will never command operational formations, but who can swell the number of staff officers in due course and in wartime their number can be increased further by the use of reservists. In theory, therefore, there should be a plentiful supply of men who are not needed as commanders to fill staff posts.

But staff officers also have to acquire experience and develop the characteristics they need in order to become effective as more senior staff officers. Any system designed to direct officers' careers must therefore cater for this need at the same time as it caters for the needs of the commanders. All staff officers will have had some command experience as junior officers before they start climbing up the staff ladder. Some will hold more senior commands before being permanently relegated to staff work and so are better placed to hold senior staff posts later on: it should not, therefore, be necessary to give them commands merely to prepare them for senior staff positions.

It could be argued that the senior officers in a country's defence ministry should be treated as an exception and given command experience in the field army at a high level, but, as stated earlier, it is not safe to do so unless they are also fully qualified operational commanders. They can in fact get all the experience they need by being employed in senior staff posts in the larger field army headquarters. In the case of the two top military posts in a defence ministry, the chief of the

defence staff and the chief of the army staff, the situation is unlikely to arise, because nowadays they are almost certain to have been chosen from officers who have held one of the principal command positions. Politicians are sometimes tempted to take a professional defence ministry staff officer whom they happen to like and trust, to fill one of these two posts and there is no doubt that there may on occasions be a case for doing so in terms of managing the services in peacetime. But it would be dangerous to do so if they thereby got someone who was incapable of doing the job properly in war, as it would be no easier to bring in a new man at short notice than it would be to change an operational commander at the last moment.

The next major factor that has to be considered when attempting to plot out a system for getting the right people into the right place at the right time, is the balance that should exist between commanders and staff officers in terms of seniority and of numbers.

From the point of view of seniority it is obvious that a commander must be senior to his principal staff officer, but there are differences of opinion as to how much senior he should be and this has a marked effect on the number of staff officers needed and the nature of the work that they do.

In its simplest form seniority is expressed in terms of rank, e.g. a major is senior to a captain. As a rule there is little difficulty regarding seniority between a commander and his own principal staff officer because in any unit or formation the rank of the commander is above that of the chief staff officer. But trouble starts to pile up if the rank of the chief staff officer is higher than that of the commander of the next junior formation, because these commanders then start to look on their commander's chief of staff as their superior, as well as the commander himself. This can quickly undermine the way in which a battle should be directed. Even if the chief staff officer is of the same rank as the commander of the next junior formation, difficulties may arise, because he may be more senior within that rank, thereby inhibiting the proper

relationships which should exist. For these reasons an ideal arrangement is for the chief of staff to be at least one rank junior to the commander of the next subordinate formations. For example, a corps is usually commanded by a lieutenant-general and its subordinate formations known as divisions are commanded by major-generals. The right rank for the chief of staff of the corps is therefore at least one rank less than a major-general, which is a brigadier or brigadier-general (according to the army being discussed). It could even be two ranks junior, i.e. colonel.

Another advantage of keeping staff ranks down is that officers who are being employed on staffs in order to get experience of command at a higher level can take up these opportunities earlier in their careers and are therefore capable of going on at an earlier age.

There are a number of other compelling reasons for ensuring that the rank of officers doing staff jobs does not become inflated. For example, senior staff officers always expect a pyramid of staff officers below them. Thus, in a large headquarters, a brigadier on the staff will expect his department to be divided into branches, each run by a colonel or lieutenant-colonel, and each of these branches will have to be subdivided into sections run by majors assisted by captains. Although there might be some justification for this if there were so many branches that the brigadier could not himself handle the volume of work done by the majors, this is not normally the case. What happens in practice is that each level re-does the work of the lower level, thereby slowing down the speed at which business gets done in the headquarters.

A second disadvantage is that the total number of staff officers in the headquarters is higher than it would be if the ranks of the senior staff officers were kept down, because fewer layers would be needed. Taken across the whole of an army this can produce a situation in which the total number of staff officers needed exceeds the number that can be found by employing officers who have fallen out of the command race, plus those still in it who need staff jobs to give them experience for future commands, plus those from the logistic

or technical branches who were never in it in the first place. Once this situation arises, officers who are still supposed to be being prepared for command, will find themselves doing staff jobs, not to gain experience for command, but merely because the staff job needs doing. This situation usually happens in armies after a prolonged period of peace, but it represents an abandonment of the priority that should be given to the provision of operational commanders.

Another example of the ill-effects caused by allowing staff ranks to creep up is that ranks of staff officers in one headquarters tend to determine the ranks of staff officers in the next lower headquarters. For example, if a department of the staff at corps headquarters is run by a colonel, there will be a tendency to want the equivalent department at the divisional headquarters to be run by lieutenant-colonels, etc.

For all these reasons, to say nothing of the advantages of economy, both the number of officers employed on the staff and their ranks should be kept as low as possible, subject only to the requirement for getting the commander's business despatched well enough for his aim to be achieved. As escalation of staff ranks and numbers seems to be endemic in most armies, it is worth trying to understand the reason for it and as the rot often stems from the situation prevailing in a country's defence ministry, that is as good a place as any to start the examination.

There are four main reasons why staff ranks tend to escalate in a defence ministry. The first one is that different services often allocate staff responsibility at different levels and each service likes to keep up with the other. For example, the navy may give the same level of staff responsibility to a commander as the army allocates to a major, who is one rank lower. In order not to be outranked on combined staffs, the army starts using lieutenant-colonels to fill jobs that should be done by majors and then extends the inflation to other appointments in other places by saying that if the responsibility warrants it in one place, it warrants it in others.

Another cause of escalation in a defence ministry is the relationship that exists between the servicemen on the one

hand and civil officials on the other. Inevitably, service officers working with civil servants compare the responsibility of the work they are doing and the pay that they are getting with that of their opposite numbers. In most countries such a comparison would favour the civil servants, if the service jobs were to be done by officers whose ranks matched their responsibility. This is because civil service ranks are matched to accountability rather than responsibility. There are three possible solutions to this problem. The first is to use servicemen of a higher rank than their jobs warrant in terms of responsibility; the second is to reduce the pay of the civil servants; and the third is to increase the pay of the service officers without increasing their ranks. Both the second and third solutions have implications beyond the confines of the defence ministry and would be difficult to arrange, so the first option is usually adopted.

The third reason for the escalation of ranks in a defence ministry is the desire to play safe. By having more senior officers than are necessary and therefore more layers of staff officers under them, there is less chance of a mistake escaping detection. Operationally speaking, this advantage is more than offset by the many disadvantages described earlier, but in a defence ministry the desire to avoid mistakes, especially those that might prove politically embarrassing, is sometimes seen as outweighing all other considerations.

The fourth reason is probably as important as all the other reasons put together, and it is the desire to provide the promotion prospects essential for a good career. Not only does escalation in the defence ministry set off a chain reaction for staff ranks in headquarters throughout the army, but it also provides many jobs for senior officers that cannot be provided elsewhere. This is because the number of command appointments is limited by the number of units and formations that the country maintains, and staff ranks outside the defence ministry are dependent on these command appointments. Senior staff posts in the defence ministry, being independent of this restraint, can redress the balance. Indeed, it would be difficult to devise a system at all that provided a

reasonable career up to an age comparable to professional careers in civilian life were it not for the opportunities afforded in defence ministries for escalating staff ranks.

Although in theory it might be possible to accept escalation in a defence ministry, but ruthlessly prevent it spreading to command and subordinate headquarters, this never happens. The main reason for this is that such an arrangement would involve retaining inside the ministry most of those who reached senior staff rank, because there would be nowhere else for them to go.

For all these reasons the number of staff officers in an army, and the ranks in which they serve, are almost always greater than would be desirable in terms of getting the best men qualified to command as early as possible and providing them with efficient staffs. In short, having an army capable of fighting a war at short notice, is barely compatible with keeping officers for a full professional career in peace, or of staffing a defence ministry where the serviceman and the civilians are well integrated and where accidents have to be avoided at all costs. Careers, inter-service relationships and the integration of service officers with civil servants in a defence ministry all mitigate against adopting a system that would provide the most operationally effective army.

The last general consideration for discussion in this chapter concerns selection. Having decided in broad terms on the time available for preparing commanders related to an age beyond which they should not be employed in the direction of operations, and having established what they have to absorb in that time, it still remains to work out a system for selecting the best at every level and discarding the others. On this hangs the success or failure of the whole business.

In practice there is no great difficulty in working out a sensible system based on tests and performance. The real difficulty stems from applying it in the face of the many pressures that are inevitably mobilized to frustrate its operation. At the lower levels these tend to come from vested interests within and without an army, all of which want

people selected for reasons other than their competence and military potential. Within the army pressure can be exerted in order to improve the position of an arm or corps, or even to ensure that a friend is given a leg up. Pressure may be exerted from outside in order to ensure that there is a fair representation of the country's regions or ethnic groups among its operational commanders. Most of these pressures are perfectly legitimate and make sense from the wider point of view, but the selection of operational commanders is so important because of the stakes involved that the wider good has to be modified to take account of it.

When it comes to the selection of the most senior operational commanders, the pressure in favour of one rather than another is often political. Since politics is the province of those governing the country it is no good saying bluntly that political considerations should not distort the selection procedure. All that can be said is that the less they do so, the better, which means educating soldiers to be as politically neutral as possible and educating politicians to eschew any advantage they may think that they will get from having an operational commander who appears to support their political objectives. There is certainly a lot of difference at the moment between one country and another regarding the extent to which politics impinges on military selections, with some governments encouraging political commitment in their senior officers while others wisely do the reverse.

The main general considerations which govern the way in which existing methods of selecting and preparing operational commanders should be altered can be summarized as follows. First, there must be no minimum age qualifications for promotion and this would inevitably result in a reduction in the age of senior commanders. Second, the number of officers employed on staffs, particularly in defence ministries, should be greatly reduced and the ranks of senior staff officers kept down. This is necessary not only to facilitate the provision of properly prepared senior commanders, but also to make the staffs themselves capable of responding to situations

as quickly and efficiently as possible. Third, systems of selecting people for promotion must be used which minimize pressures from vested interests, both from within and from outside an army.

The combined effect of these measures would undoubtedly involve modifying the way in which officers' careers are looked at in most countries today. But it is worth bearing in mind that there are already considerable variations between one country and the next, both with regard to the way in which officers' careers are handled and the way in which army officers are regarded within the community. Modifying existing systems need not therefore be looked at as striking at the very fabric of a nation's way of life.

AN OUTLINE SOLUTION

In any army, the starting point for an examination of the way in which officers' careers should be arranged should be the commitments which that particular army must be prepared to undertake, since they determine to a great extent the sort of commanders that the army concerned requires. Furthermore, any assessment of commitments should include those that are likely to arise in the long term as well as the short term, because of the length of time that it takes to prepare a commander for the tasks that are likely to confront him.

On the basis of the argument deployed in earlier chapters, it would seem that if there is any likelihood of an army becoming involved in intense armoured and mechanized operations, the senior operational commanders should, for planning purposes, be no older than about forty-five. If, on the other hand, there is very little chance of such operations taking place and if a country is prepared to base its defence policy mainly on being ready to undertake limited war and counter-insurgency operations, it would be possible to plan on employing the most senior operational commanders for a few more years. If these figures are accepted as a general guide, most modern armies would need to reduce the age of their senior commanders by between five and ten years, which, without involving a revolutionary change of course, could not be done without some discomfort.

It could, of course, be argued that a system that was geared solely to catering for operational efficiency, and which took no account of the desire of some individuals to be employed

by the army throughout their working lives, would result in too few officers of too low a calibre joining in the first place. This would in turn lead to an even less efficient army in operational terms and in all other ways as well. There is no easy answer to this, but it is none the less worth looking at alternatives to existing systems. For such an examination to be realistic, it involves taking account of the status quo, since it is impracticable to scrap what exists and set up a new system as though the present one was not there.

The purpose of this chapter is to show how existing systems governing the way in which officers' careers are managed, could be modified in the interests of increasing operational efficiency without destroying the basic structure of the army concerned. The problem will be examined first by looking at what is needed from the point of view of directing operations and then in terms of other requirements.

On the assumption that the upper age limit for operational commanders is more or less fixed by the army's commitments, the two main factors that must be considered are the number of stages that a man has to pass through in order to be prepared adequately and the age at which he can start his preparation. Of these the first is more important if only because there is less room for flexibility.

It is highly desirable that a senior operational commander should be well grounded as a regimental soldier and should at least have commanded a platoon, a company and a battalion in infantry terms, or the equivalent in other arms. Ideally, he should be able to spend about two years in each of these posts, although if he is lucky enough to hold them under operational conditions, he would need less time in order to gain the necessary experience. In all, he needs around six years as a regimental officer, excluding any time he might spend in regimental staff and administrative positions such as operations officer or adjutant. Before exercising a senior operational command, he also needs experience in command of formations such as brigades and divisions, say another four years. Altogether that means ten years in command posts.

Although an endless series of training courses is not essential for preparing a senior commander, any officer is bound to need one general course which teaches him the basic function of an officer before he can set out on his career, another one in order to teach him the technicalities of the arm to which he belongs and, later in his service, he needs a command and staff course to teach him how the various arms and the different services work together to achieve their common purpose. Other courses are needed to teach officers jobs outside the main command chain and may have to be undertaken by anyone leaving the mainstream before they can hold certain appointments. Also many other useful short courses can be undertaken by officers while they are holding command, or other jobs, so long as they do not involve too long an absence. Altogether an officer who is being prepared for senior operational command needs to allow about four years for essential training courses over and above the ten years he can expect to spend in command positions.

It has been shown that experience on the staff can also be helpful in preparing an officer for senior operational command. Two such postings, lasting for about two years each, would add another four years to the time needed for preparation, to which should be added another four years to take advantage of unexpected opportunities such as time spent on active service with the army of another country, or of a posting in the training organization, or of time spent in non-command regimental positions as mentioned above. Incidentally, most of these non-command regimental posts can and must be held by short-service officers or officers promoted from the ranks.

All this adds up to twenty-two years which, if subtracted from a top age of around forty-two for the man who should be starting his time as a senior operational commander in an armoured and mechanized situation, or forty-six in the case of the commander in a limited war or counter-insurgency situation, means that his career would have to start not later than at the age of twenty-one in the first case or twenty-four in the second. This should present no problem except in the case of

the man who wishes to go to university before joining the army and even this works out easily enough, except in the worst case where the two years needed would have to be made up from those put aside for opportunity postings.

A more difficult problem is how to man all the staff and administration posts that modern armies maintain, if the mainstream officers being prepared for senior operational command can only afford the time to fill two of them during their careers. Of course, many of the posts do not have to be filled by mainstream officers at all, since they are specialist posts that must be filled by specialists who would not be in the running for operational command appointments in any case. But even so, there would still be more staff jobs to be filled by non-specialist officers than there would be officers available to fill them if they were following the career pattern outlined above.

There are several ways in which this problem can be solved. First, some potential operational commanders drop out as they progress up the command chain, either because they are found wanting, or because fewer are needed at the higher levels than at the lower levels and the less good fail to be selected. Once an officer has dropped out of the mainstream operational command chain he should be available for frequent employment as a staff officer, possibly alternating between staff duty and administrative and training commands. Were it not for the insatiable demands of defence ministries, this source of staff officers could probably be made to suffice by the simple expedient of reducing the number of staff jobs that already exist. In most armies there would be little difficulty in doing this, if the need to employ officers to a certain set age, such as fifty-five or sixty, were abandoned and the rank at which staff appointments were held was kept down to a reasonable level.

Defence ministries are, however, a stumbling-block and no serious adjustment of office career patterns will ever be effective until a way has been found to reduce the number of mainstream officers required to work in them. There would seem to be two possible approaches to this problem. First,

each country should make a careful study of the way in which its defence ministry is organized to see whether a different and less expensive system could be devised. Most countries endlessly look at the justification for the existence of individual posts or even of whole branches of the staff as currently constituted, while at the same time perpetuating an overall structure that may be cumbersome and wasteful in the extreme, either as a result of duplication of functions between a central authority and the individual services, or because of duplicated chains of command within the army itself.

A second approach to the problem might be to select a number of officers at a certain stage in their careers who were not likely to go much farther up the operational command chain, but who had a special aptitude for high-level administration and offer them continuous employment in the defence ministry for many years as civil servants rather than as army officers. They would have enough of a military background to enable them to hold posts that straightforward civil servants could not hold, but their age and speed of promotion could follow civil-service patterns without distorting the operational needs of the army. The army's needs in the defence ministry would be safeguarded by annotating certain posts as being tied to this class of civil servant and the man's needs would be safeguarded by a clause that enabled him to be employed in normal non-annotated posts in the civil service after a time, thus leaving him free to rise to the top grades eventually, if he was worth it. Quite apart from the advantages that would accrue to the army, this scheme could also be beneficial to the whole machinery of government to the extent that it would introduce a number of men into the system who had been taught to think clearly, be decisive and accept the authority of the people for whom they working.

At this point it is worth looking at specimen careers relevant to four different sorts of officer, i.e. the man that gets to the top of the operational command chain, the man that falls out of it at a late stage and becomes a high-class staff officer, the man who transfers to the civil service and, finally, the

man who swiftly falls out of the mainstream command race and becomes a useful member of the staff and a backbone of the training organization. There are, of course, other categories, particularly in the more technically specialized parts of an army, that do not need to be discussed here because their career patterns would not be greatly different from those experienced at the moment, although there might have to be slight adjustments to avoid too great a gap appearing between the ages at which officers reached a particular rank.

On this basis, the career of the man who reached the top might look something like this. Joining the army after university at around twenty-one, he would undergo two years of training which would include special arms training. He would take over his first command as a platoon commander or equivalent at twenty-three and learn his basic trade as a commander until he was twenty-six. He might then do another regimental job, or an attachment to a foreign army, or be employed in some other capacity that would give him useful experience until he was twenty-eight, after which he should command a company until he was thirty. He should then go to a command and staff college for two years and receive all the formal education that was needed to see him through, in single-service or tri-service terms, as a staff officer or commander: all else he will have to gain from experience and private study. After this he could be employed as the chief of staff of a brigade and then as the commanding officer of a battalion. Alternatively, he could command a battalion first and then become chief of staff of a division. Whichever way round he did it, he would be ready to go on to the command of formations at the age of thirty-six.

From this point it is more difficult to depict a specimen career because of the variety of circumstances that may be encountered. On a theoretical basis a man could hold successive commands as a one-star (brigadier/brigadier-general), two-star (major-general), three-star (lieutenant-general), and four-star (full general) officer, holding each appointment for about two years and being finished as an

operational commander at around forty-five. This might even happen in an army which was only concerned with the one type of very intense war. Something like it was done by the Israelis in the late 'sixties and early 'seventies, although the rank structure did not exactly correspond. In their case, division and front, the equivalent of a corps, were both commanded by two-star officers and overall operational command, which was, in effect, carried out by the chief of the general staff, exercised by a three-star officer.*

In practice a more suitable career pattern, particularly in countries such as the United States, Britain, France or India where counter-insurgency, overseas or home defence operations are as important as all-out war, would be for a man to fill two command appointments at two-star level, each concerned with the conduct or preparation for different sorts of war, before holding a command at three-star level. This takes account of the fact that in limited or counter-insurgency campaigns the senior operational commander is likely to be a three-star rather than a four-star officer because of the size of the force involved. If such a pattern was followed, the man would have completed his three-star command at forty-five and could then go on to act as a superior commander at four stars, if required, or become the head of his service, subsequently perhaps going on to be the head serving officer in a defence ministry. Furthermore, he would be able to spend three or four years in each of these later appointments, which is essential if adequate continuity is to be achieved, and still be finished altogether by the time that he was in his early-to-middle fifties.

It should be noted that this outline career assumes a late starting-point as a result of the man's going to a university before joining the army, which leads to a race through the lower ranks. Some countries avoid this by combining initial officer training with a degree course. This is more economic in terms of time and gives the man a longer period in which to adapt to the way of life required of an officer of the country concerned, which is, in practice, one of the most important aspects of initial officer training. On the other hand it can be a

disadvantage to the man when he leaves the army at the end of his service. However, the extra years that would be gained if he had come straight from school could usefully be used by inserting another staff job, possibly in the defence ministry, either before or after commanding a division. Furthermore, this career assumes that the army concerned was giving priority to flat-out armoured and mechanized war. If this priority did not exist there would be the opportunity to include another appointment, possibly in the man's middle thirties, which would help to widen his experience.

In any case it is important to realize that the specimen career pattern outlined above does not constitute a recommendation as to how a particular country should arrange its affairs. It merely illustrates, in a very general sense, a system that would be relevant to the conditions likely to be encountered in modern war. It should, of course, be varied to take account of the qualities and experience of the individuals that happened to be available at any given moment. Above all, as has been stressed in earlier chapters, it is important not to become slavishly tied to any age factor, not even a more sensible one than that operating in so many armies at present, since it inhibits the exploitation of talent in the interests of stability and is inimical to the development of a successful fighting force.

The next career to look at is that of the man who falls out of the command stream at the one-star level or above. Such a person will have followed the pattern described in the earlier example, and will therefore have considerable command experience. If he fell out after holding a command at one-star level, he would be in a position to become chief of staff of a corps or to hold any of the important staff appointments in higher headquarters, or in the defence ministry. He could subsequently command an establishment in the training organization or a base area and then become a two-star officer (major-general) at around forty-two to forty-four and do two more jobs in that rank as chief of staff to the most senior operational commander, or to a superior commander, or in a defence ministry. A few people in this category might even become three-star generals in the highest administrative posts

in a defence ministry and retire in their early fifties. If an officer fell out at one of the higher levels, i.e. after holding a two-star or three-star command, he would be even better placed to hold a very senior staff appointment. In short, these people would have a very respectable career in their own right, but would have to accept being older than the men they were working for during the latter part of their service.

The next group are the people who transfer to the civil service in order to hold those posts in a defence ministry that require more military knowledge than a normal civil servant would have, but which do not have to be held by a senior serving officer. Such people would probably transfer after commanding a battalion at about thirty-four to thirty-six and should continue in specially annotated posts for about ten years. After that they should be free to rise to the highest civil service ranks in the defence ministry or in other ministries if desired. There is no reason why some of these people should not reach up into the most influential posts in the civil service or indeed transfer out of it into other branches of government.

The last group to be considered are those that are obviously not fliers, either as staff officers or as commanders. Some of these people may well be good regimental officers and qualify for command of a battalion, possibly at a slightly later age than the other groups. They would be most likely to get such a command if there was a gap between the appearance of one of the mainstream people and the next, or because one suddenly fell out for personal or health reasons. They would tend to become available for use in staff appointments in their early or middle thirties and would vary greatly in quality, some having been through the command and staff college and others having failed to get there altogether. These people would man most of the less-important staff jobs and would also be the instructors in the training units, alternating between the two. There is no reason why they should not continue in this way for about fifteen years, reaching the rank of colonel before retirement in their late forties. There are so many variations in the appointments that these people could hold that it is not worth listing a series of them as an example.

As a matter of interest, the career of a highly successful commander from the past is outlined below. First he spent two years as a platoon commander, followed by a year as adjutant in a European campaign during which his battalion fought in a major battle. He then commanded a company for a year, after which he became the personal staff officer to a general who was second-in-command of an army involved in a counter-insurgency campaign for a further year. He then did another spell of two years as a company commander, mainly campaigning in Europe, and was wounded. The next year he became the commanding officer of a battalion and continued in that capacity for four years. His next appointment was as chief of staff of an amphibious force that carried out an unsuccessful operation in Europe, and the following year he commanded a brigade in a successful amphibious campaign overseas. His final job was as commander of a force in a limited war that won a decisive victory. His whole career had lasted for seventeen years when he was killed at the age of thirty-two. The officer was James Wolfe, and his victory at Quebec not only assured that Canada became British, but also, by removing the French threat to the American colonies, enabled the colonists to throw off the colonial yoke and become an independent country eight years later. It is worth mentioning that Wolfe had no royal or noble connections and made his way entirely as a result of his own military ability.

There would inevitably be some advantages and some disadvantages in making adjustments on the lines described above, not all of which are directly concerned with improving operational efficiency. For example, a reduction in the overall number of staff officers and of the number of staff tiers in headquarters, not to mention a corresponding reduction in the rank and age of the senior staff officers, would greatly help in speeding up the making of decisions. It would also assist in keeping senior officers in touch with the way in which the more junior ones were thinking and vice versa, and it would be considerably more economic than existing systems. On the other hand, people would become senior without getting so

much opportunity for understanding how the world works in general, or of getting as much useful military experience as they otherwise might. They could as a result, be more impatient and less easy to control, although the frustration engendered by keeping people hanging around on the way up also has this effect to some extent. On balance it would seem that the advantage to an army would be heavily in favour of making the adjustments suggested, even before purely operational requirements were considered.

Another big advantage of a system designed to reduce the age of senior commanders is that it would, in the process, reduce the age of the intermediate commanders as well, e.g. company, battalion and brigade commanders. As a result they would find themselves carrying out these very exacting tasks between their late twenties and middle thirties when their physical powers are still at their peak and on a par with the men in the fighting units.

When it comes to a consideration of an officer's prospects, there is no doubt that he would have a lesser chance of reaching the higher ranks because senior appointments outside the mainstream chain of command would be fewer as a result of the reduction in senior staff posts. This would be partly offset by the departure of a number of the better officers to become civil servants. For the rest, an adjustment of the pay of the various ranks and the age at which pensions became payable, together with the fact that people would reach higher ranks at an earlier age should provide adequate financial compensation.

But there would still remain the question of what a man could do after leaving the army, for the most part in his late forties as opposed to the mid or late fifties as at present. In fact the new system could be a marked improvement over the old one because, even now, most officers want another job after leaving and often find difficulty in getting one precisely because of their advanced age. There is little doubt that a man would stand a better chance of establishing himself in a second career if he was available to start it five or ten years earlier than at present. He would be more likely to be successful if he had reached high rank in the army at an early age. For example, a

general or lieutenant-general who had commanded a large force and was available at say forty-five, would be very well placed to start a new career in industry, politics or diplomacy. A one-star or two-star officer of the same age who had held senior staff appointments would be equally in demand. As always, the less successful would be less sought-after, but providing that they were prepared to be realistic with regard to their prospects, they should find that the experience that they had gained in the army, combined with their comparative youth, would open up adequate opportunities. It is not possible to be more specific because employment prospects vary so greatly between one country and the next, as does the esteem in which army officers are held and their status in the community. It is only necessary to compare the position in, say, America, England, Germany, Turkey, Israel and Pakistan, to realize this fact.

It is, however, insufficient merely to say that an individual's prospects under the system recommended would be as good or better than under the systems in force in most countries today. Where a system is to be changed, it is important to explain the advantages of the new one to the people of the country concerned, in order to ensure that officer recruits come forward. This is no easy matter, because any change, however beneficial, is usually seen as a change for the worse by the older generation and they are the people who influence the young in the selection of their careers. Parents and schoolmasters have to be convinced of the advantages both to the country and to the individual and this would involve a serious sustained and expensive propaganda campaign.

The last major problem meriting discussion is how an army, which is at present organized to provide careers for all officers up to the middle or late fifties, could switch to the system recommended here. Again, armies vary so greatly in their existing systems that it is not possible to give any detailed account of how they should switch from one to another. For example, America is more flexible than most European countries regarding the age of its senior commanders, but because

of the size of the staff in the Pentagon and in the larger headquarters, men sometimes get promoted into senior command positions with inadequate command experience. In European countries they may get the experience, but arrive too late; they may even arrive too late without the necessary experience.

There are, in fact, three essential parts to the business of changing over from one system to another. The first is the recognition that in career planning top priority must be given to the provision of operational commanders at the expense, if necessary, of all else. The next is to eliminate the age factor in the selection of officers for command appointments. These two things taken together would inevitably reduce the ages of nearly all operational commanders. The third thing that has to be done is to reduce the size of staffs so that career patterns along the lines of those mentioned become practicable. Reductions on the necessary scale would in most armies involve a considerable amount of reorganization.

It might be tempting to try reducing the age of commanders without making the necessary adjustment to staffs, but in this case two things would inevitably happen. First, the new young commanders would not get the necessary experience because too much of their early life would have to be spent on the staff. Second, the relationship between the commanders and the senior staff officers, particularly those in the defence ministries, would be wrong, as a result of which the ages of the commanders would be allowed to creep up over a period of a few years to even out the anomalies.

In practice, the first thing to do in order to carry out the change successfully, is to undertake whatever reorganization is necessary for reducing the size of staffs. This would automatically result in a reduction in the number of officers required overall, and those surplus to the army's needs would have to be granted redundancy payments to compensate them for early retirement. Most armies are used to making arrangements of this sort which come about whenever reductions have to be made. Once this had been completed, it would be simple enough to replace commanders as they moved on with younger men, although it would take some years before the

new career pattern was fully established. But once the army's organization was changed and the staff posts removed, there would be no incentive for letting the age of commanders creep up again, since a proper balance within an army could only be maintained if commanders were constantly being pushed up, or pushed out of the command stream. The only thing that would seriously sabotage the system would be to allow a significant number of senior staff posts to become re-established.

In summary, it can be seen that the ideal length of an operational commander's career is about twenty-five years, e.g. from the early twenties to the middle forties. A few of these people are required for up to another ten years to act as superior commanders or as defence chiefs in defence ministries.

But, for a number of reasons, such as providing an attractive career and getting good value for the money spent on training officers, most modern armies extend the length of their operational commanders' careers to between thirty-five and forty years by interspersing periods of operational command with many other activities such as additional staff appointments, administrative work, courses designed to broaden the outlook and so on. Indeed, it is apparent that many posts exist, partially at least, to provide opportunities for employment.

But if any army wants to be capable of carrying out the purposes for which it exists, it must provide adequately-prepared operational commanders who are young enough to fulfil their functions effectively. In most countries this can only be done by abandoning existing systems of career planning, which in turn involves reducing staffs, giving priority to the preparation of operational commanders and getting over to the public at large the advantages of a shorter career for officers.

It is mainly a matter of grasping the bull by the horns.

Note

1 Chaim Herzog, *The War of Atonement*, Little, Brown and Co., USA, 1975.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

In this book every effort has been made to stick closely to the aim stated in the introduction, that is to say, to examine the way in which operations should be directed, to assess the characteristics and skills that commanders most need and to identify in general terms the arrangements required to prepare them for their task. Discussion of the other tasks that have to be undertaken in an army has been limited to considering how they affect the provision of operational commanders. At the same time no attempt has been made to suggest that producing high-class operational commanders is the only thing that determines the outcome of war. The contention is merely that all other activities, such as providing large numbers of well-equipped troops, will be rendered useless if high-class commanders are not available to direct operations.

In closing, there are one or two points that should be stressed. The first is that arranging officers' careers in such a way as to produce the best operational commanders must not be done to the detriment of units. Although operational commanders themselves have an important part to play in the production of effective units, with particular reference to instilling confidence, arranging for useful tactical training to be carried out and ensuring that units are well equipped, supplied and supported, there are other aspects to the business which are beyond their control. For example, an operational commander cannot usually influence directly the selection of the regimental officers, or the number available in a unit, or the standard of individual training, or the principles on which

Closing Thoughts

discipline is based, all of which are governed by a general policy applicable to the army concerned.

In the context of this book, units play an important part in providing command experience at the lower levels for officers who are being prepared for senior command positions, but that is obviously not the main reason for their existence, which is to be ready for war, or if war comes, to do the fighting. The best officers can only speed through their regimental service if other highly effective ones are available to fill all the slots that they have not time to fill. A number of officers, who have no intention of staying in the army indefinitely, or who have risen through the ranks and are therefore for the most part too old to reach senior positions, or who will in the later part of their careers be employed outside the main command stream, must therefore constitute the backbone of the units and much attention and effort must be expended over their selection and preparation. This is a separate issue to the one discussed in this book, but one that is no less important. Fortunately there is very little clash of interest involved, since a steady transit of the best officers through the main command positions within a unit is more likely to help than hinder the operational effectiveness of the unit itself. In effect it ensures that commanding officers and company commanders are younger than would be the case if their selection was solely governed by factors that were domestic to the unit concerned. In other words, the needs of the army as a whole conspire to force the hand of the regimental authorities into doing things which are, in the long term, advantageous to the units as well as to the enemy. A whole book could be written about building up effective units, but it is a separate subject to the one covered in this work.

Another major subject concerns procuring and making use of the fruits of modern technology. Again this overlaps the subject covered by this book, to the extent that operational commanders must be able to exploit the technology underlying their weapons and equipment to the hilt and must therefore be taught to understand it. But there is a wide area

of activity in which they cannot afford the time to become involved while they remain in the main command stream. This covers the business of procuring equipment. Appointments in this field have to be filled by capable, qualified men with an understanding of both tactical requirements and technology. There is a problem in finding the right people to fill jobs in this field, in that it requires officers who, if they have sufficient understanding of the tactical background, may well be wanted for command appointments, but who, if well enough grounded in the more technical parts of the army, may not have enough tactical background. This dilemma can only be resolved by careful selection of individuals, based on priorities laid down within an army, and, in a general sense, these priorities have to be weighted towards providing the best commanders for the reasons outlined in this book. None the less every army has to strike a balance between the procurement of weapons, the provision of effective units and the selection and preparation of operational commanders.

The next point is one that has to be reiterated most strongly. It is that the general ideas outlined in this book cannot be applied to any particular army other than in the context of that army's own circumstances. For example, measures that might make good sense in relation to the army of the United States, might be totally irrelevant to the needs of Germany, Spain or Sweden. This comes about not only as a result of each army's differing commitments, but also because of the ways in which each country's army has developed over a long period, based largely on its past commitments both external and internal. Lord Carver's explanation of the differences in the historical background of the world's principal armies is well set out in his book *Twentieth-Century Warriors* and is very relevant in this context.¹

When it comes to finding an objective assessment of the circumstances facing any particular army, against which to weigh the ideas contained in this book, another difficulty arises, which is that an assessment emanating from an official body such as a defence ministry, is inevitably influenced by so

many conflicting political, military and economic interests, that it only sees the light of day after a series of compromises which reduce its value as a statement on which to base reform. On the other hand, any assessment made by a private individual is naturally dependant on his knowledge of the facts and on his ability to interpret them. It is, therefore, rightly treated with reserve as a basis for reform, if only because it is an expression of one man's views.

The difficulty of producing a sufficiently accurate statement on the existing and likely future position, which is needed as a basis for the planning of reform, is usually so great as to ensure that radical measures are postponed indefinitely, unless they are imposed from above by a politician or brought about by disaster. The only other way in which progress can be made is by pressure from below, which happens when a large enough number of middle-piece officers, together with civil servants and commentators outside an army, become so convinced of the need for reform that they are able to coax and manoeuvre political or military leaders into taking the necessary action. In practice most of what is described as steady progress comes about in this way, but history shows that there is seldom enough of it to keep an army up to date in a rapidly changing world.

The author's book, *Warfare as a Whole*, is an example of the sort of assessment against which the ideas contained in this book could be weighed in order to identify the measures that need to be taken in one particular army, i.e. the British army. Being an individual view it would not of course constitute an adequate basis for executive action, but it is well suited as a starting-point for people who wish to form their own opinions on these complicated matters. From the point of view of other armies, it is relevant to the extent that it shows what needs to be considered, such as commitments and existing organizational structures, and what sort of options exist for reform in the many different spheres of military activity.

Finally, it is worth reverting to the influence which nuclear weapons have on this modern world, since they have been

largely responsible for the twin facts that the intensity of war in the second half of the century has been so much less than it was in the first half and that the armies of the major powers are considerably smaller than they would be if nuclear weapons did not exist. It is interesting to notice that, notwithstanding these facts, people throughout the world have a deep, almost emotional, fear of nuclear weapons which in some places spills over into fear of all nuclear energy, even when used for peaceful purposes. Of course, nuclear weapons would be immensely destructive if used and could, if employed on a large scale, go, in the worst case, some way towards destroying the environment in which human beings live. But there are other ways in which mankind can destroy its own habitat and some of them, such as persistent pollution, or the indiscriminate felling of forests for short-term profit, are equally dangerous in the long term. In practical terms the problem is to devise safe ways of exploiting the benefits of nuclear weapons, as opposed to doing away with them altogether, which would, in any case, be difficult, since the technology involved is so widely understood.

But the fact that armies are smaller than they would be if nuclear weapons did not exist does not alter the fact that they must be capable of rapid deployment and of fighting a very intense battle at short notice. As demonstrated in this book, this means that in war, commanders have to be capable of operating at a great rate over a prolonged period. It is also true, to a slightly lesser extent, of staff officers and all those in the logistic and administrative echelons of an army.

It is, incidentally, probable that some armies will become even smaller than they are at present, providing nuclear weapons are retained, if the existing trend towards improving relations between the two main power blocs continues. This will raise another problem since it is always easier to include the sort of reforms of officers' careers described in this book in plans for increasing the size of an army, rather than in those concerned with decreasing it. The reason for this is that the most economic way of running an organization down is,

where possible, to synchronize reductions with natural wastage, which reduces the need for making large-scale redundancy payments. Likewise, any reform of officers' careers that involved reducing the total number required would be most economically handled by natural wastage for the same reason. To do either of these things separately would probably be beyond the scope of natural wastage: to do them together would certainly incur heavy redundancy payments, to say nothing of the pain and inconvenience that would be experienced by many worthy individuals.

But if armies are to be reduced in size, it is even more important in terms of the efficiency of the armies themselves to introduce reforms into the way in which officers are employed. One of the main difficulties about reducing the size of an army is working out how to match the reduction of units and formations with adequate reductions in the size of staffs, particularly those in defence departments or ministries. What usually happens is that arbitrary percentage cuts in large headquarters and the defence departments are ordered which leave the higher staffs doing what they were doing before, albeit with fewer people, long after the way in which the army is organized has changed. What is needed is a reappraisal of the way in which staffs should be structured to fit in with the new concepts regarding the way in which the armed forces are likely to be used.

And this leads back to the question of how an officer's career should develop. The general tenor of this book is that officers should be pushed along faster than is now the case in most armies, that the very able should reach high rank quicker than they do at the moment and that with the exception of a very small number who are needed to hold the top appointments in defence ministries or departments, they should all be finished with soldiering between five and ten years earlier than at present.

Although these recommendations are made primarily to ensure a successful outcome to any military operations that may take place, they are by no means inconsistent with trends within the civilian communities of most developed countries

today. Admittedly, reforms on these lines might put some suitable men off joining the army, especially if they were looking for a safe, long-term career. But it is equally certain that the sort of career offered by most modern armies puts off many able men who are looking for responsibility and reward, comparable to that found in civilian life, at a comparable age. To a young man the spectacle of a senior officer, overweight, hard of hearing and short of breath,² is hardly one that inspires confidence or a desire to stay the course.

The inescapable fact is that the world is changing ever more rapidly and that armies in general and systems for providing commanders capable of directing modern operations in particular, must not be allowed to lag behind.

Notes

i Lord Carver, *Twentieth-Century Warriors*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1987, pp. 431-4.

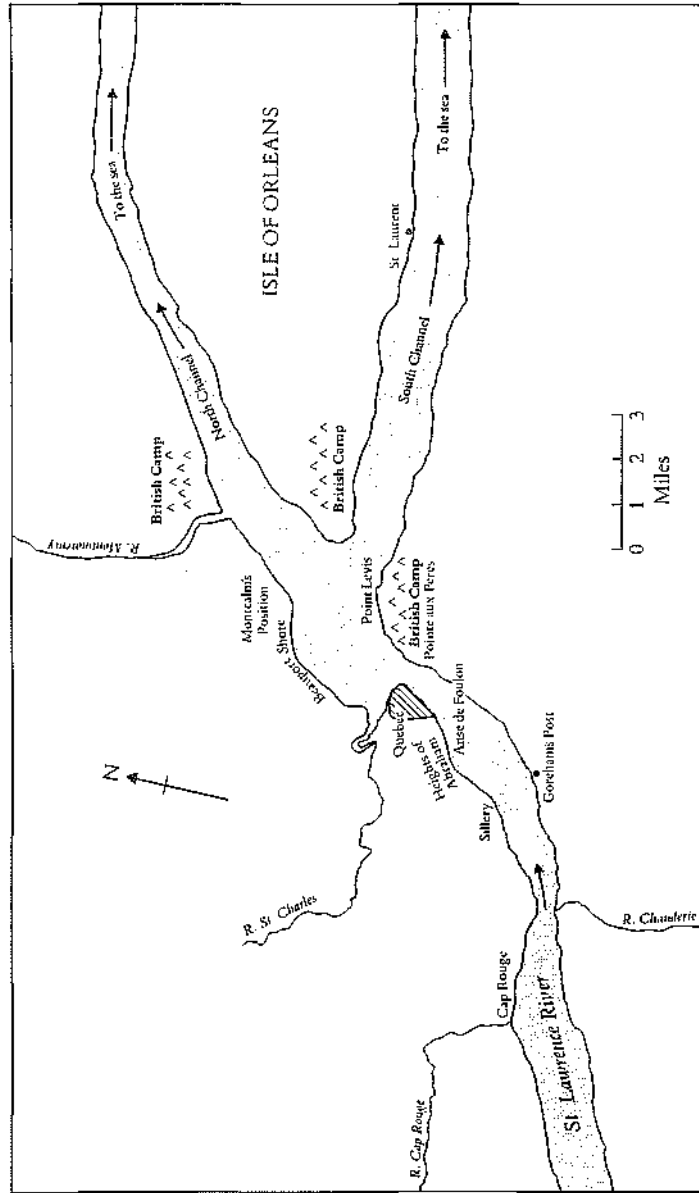
2 An apt description of the author as a senior commander.

APPENDIX

Applying the Principles of War to a Historical Study

The purpose of this appendix is to show how practical experience can be gained from studying a past campaign in the light of the principles of war. Wolfe's capture of Quebec in 1759 will serve as an example. The campaign involved relatively few troops and lasted for only a short time, which makes it easy to examine. By contrast, the results of the campaign were immensely important since, by removing the threat posed by France to England's American colonists, it left them free to revolt from their allegiance to the crown and set up a country which subsequently become the greatest power on earth.

This appendix is laid out in accordance with the recommendations made in Chapter 5 for the study of military history, that is to say, it starts with a straight narrative of events and then briefly analyses each phase of the campaign in the light of the principles of war, as if a staff officer of the commander concerned with that particular part of the campaign was checking to see how well the principles were reflected in the plan. The reader can then look back at the narrative to see how matters worked out in practice. Both the narrative of events and the outlining of the various plans has been kept to the minimum necessary for demonstrating this system of studying the value of the principles of war. Much detail, such as the tactics employed and the relationship between Wolfe and his subordinates, which is of interest concerning the way in which the operations were directed, is omitted, since it might obscure the purpose of the demonstration.



Quebec campaign, 1759

War broke out between England and Prussia on the one hand and France, Spain and Austria on the other in 1756. The overall plan pursued by England and Prussia was for the Prussians to maintain an offensive in Europe, while England mounted diversions against the French coast to tie down French forces, attacked French colonies overseas and mounted a blockade which, among other things, was designed to prevent France from sending assistance to her colonies.

In America, the plan was to destroy French power in Canada by a three-fold advance: in the west to establish a position on Lake Ontario; in the centre to advance up the Hudson River towards Montreal; from the east to send an amphibious force up the St Lawrence to capture Quebec once Louisburg at the mouth of the river had been captured, which was achieved in 1758.

Wolfe was selected as the commander of the expedition sent to capture Quebec. He had experience of amphibious operations having served as Quartermaster-General (in effect chief-of-staff) of the Rochefort expedition in 1757, which was one of the major raids on the French coast, and having commanded a brigade in the force which captured Louisburg in 1758. The Quebec expedition was mounted from England, but came under the overall command of the commander-in-chief in America who in 1759 was personally commanding the central line of advance and was therefore unable to communicate with Wolfe.

Wolfe's force left England on 15 February and set off up the St Lawrence from Cape Breton Island on 13 May. The ships arrived about ten miles downstream of Quebec, off the Isle of Orleans, on 26 June.

From the point of view of the terrain Quebec seemed impregnable. Upstream of the city to the west, the mile-wide river ran for eight miles between heavily wooded and apparently inaccessible cliffs to Cap Rouge. On the other side Quebec was protected by the River St Charles, its mouth guarded by a boom and a floating battery of guns. A low-lying stretch of land known as the Beauport shore, intersected

by two small rivers, ran east from the mouth of the St Charles for a distance of six miles to cliffs overlooking the Montmorency River which entered the St Lawrence through a steep gorge. Guns mounted in the citadel at Quebec made it dangerous for ships to pass upstream.

But there were major difficulties for the French as a result of their general position in Canada. The original French intention had been to link the St Lawrence with the Ohio and Mississippi by a chain of forts guarding permanent settlements which would contain the English colonies in the east part of the continent. Clearly the whole scheme, together with the defence of the country, depended on retaining freedom of navigation along the St Lawrence, which was guarded by the fortresses at Louisburg and Quebec, garrisoned by regular troops of the French army. But over the years insufficient immigrants had been attracted from France and the French government had to some extent lost interest in the whole area. At the start of the war a small force of additional regulars under the command of the Marquis of Montcalm, had been sent as reinforcements. By the summer of 1759 Montcalm had at his disposal in the Quebec area around 15,000 men, of whom 3,500 were regulars from France, the remainder being local militia. The French governor-general in Canada was the Marquis of Vaudreuil who was jealous of his position, disliked interference from France and distrusted the French army. He was consistently hostile to Montcalm and tried to reduce his authority over the local militia. Both Vaudreuil and Montcalm were well aware that the loss of Louisburg in 1758 would lead to an attempt upon Quebec in 1759.

In order to defend Quebec, Montcalm, anticipating an attack from the north-west, concentrated his regulars in an entrenched camp on the Beauport shore. He built a bridge of boats over the mouth of the St Charles River and other bridges over the two small rivers between the St Charles River and the Montmorency River to enable him to move his troops rapidly from his camp towards any point of attack. He also prepared rafts of timber and fireships to float down on to

any English ships that might appear in the river basin below Quebec, and lie strengthened the bastion of the citadel.

Wolfe's force consisted of about 9,000 soldiers divided into three brigades commanded by Brigadier-Generals Monckton, Murray and Townshend. He was supported by a fleet under the command of Vice-Admiral Saunders which consisted of 170 vessels of various sorts of which 22 were ships of the line. There were nearly 20,000 sailors manning these ships so the total number of men to be supported was around 30,000. Most of the supplies needed had to come by sea from the New England ports.

Wolfe and Saunders got on well together and were fully aware of the close co-operation that had to exist if the amphibious potential of the combined force was to be realized. From the start, Wolfe had insisted that officers of both of the services should live as closely together as possible, and throughout the campaign sailors and soldiers were made to work together as often as possible on such projects as building rafts and hauling guns around.

Having anchored in the South Channel off St Laurent, Wolfe sent a small reconnaissance force ashore on to the Isle of Orleans, but they were forced back to the ships by a superior number of Canadian militia together with some Indians. But these people soon withdrew from the island and the next day, which was 27 June, Wolfe started to disembark his main body and was able to view both Quebec and Montcalm's entrenchments on the Beauport shore from the western tip of the island. That same night a heavy squall hit the fleet at its anchorage, causing some damage which convinced the admiral that he would have to move farther west into the mouth of the basin. But this could not be done until Wolfe could occupy Pointe Levis, which he arranged to do with Monckton's brigade on 30 June. Meanwhile, on the night of 28 June, the French launched their rafts and fireships against the fleet, but with little effect.

Having established Monckton around Point Levis, which involved driving off a party of some 600 Canadians and 40 Indians, the next step was to establish a battery of guns at

Pointe aux Peres which could fire into Quebec. This was essential in order to hinder the French batteries in Quebec from preventing the move of British ships upstream. It also enabled Wolfe to threaten the city with gun-fire, thereby putting pressure on Montcalm to come out from behind his entrenchments and instigate some offensive action. But establishing the position took some time because building the necessary fortifications was constantly interrupted by French gun-fire from Quebec.

During the next ten days the British occupied themselves with three separate enterprises. The first was the important business of occupying the Pointe aux Peres position. The second was taking preliminary action that would enable a landing to be made upstream of Quebec. To this end Brigadier Murray was sent on a reconnaissance along the south bank of the St Lawrence as far as the Chauderie River from where he reported on 5 July that a landing might possibly be attempted. Preliminary orders were issued to the army and the fleet to prepare for such an attack once the battery at Pointe aux Peres was in position: only after this would it be possible to move enough ships up the river. At the same time, Wolfe decided to move Townshend's brigade from the Isle of Orleans to the north bank of the St Lawrence downstream of the Montmorency River. This would pose a threat to Montcalm's left flank and divert his attention from the proposed landing above Quebec.

By 8 July it was apparent that the upstream approach would have to be postponed, because of the problem of getting shipping past Quebec. Next day, Townshend's brigade moved across the river as planned and the following day it was joined by Murray's brigade. At the same time, most of Monckton's brigade were withdrawn from their position at Point Levis into the nearby woods. It would seem that Wolfe wished to give the impression that he was concentrating his forces for an attack on Montcalm's left flank, in the hope that Montcalm might take advantage of the apparent weakening of the Point Levis position to recapture it, in which case his troops would be ambushed by Monckton's

brigade. But this stratagem did not succeed to any extent, although a mixed force of civilians, Indians and students, backed by about 300 militia, did cross and shoot at each other for a short while before retreating whence they came.

With the batteries now in place at the Pointe aux Peres, Wolfe returned to his idea of an attack upstream of Quebec. He had already pushed out a force of Rangers into the area and on 16 July the Grenadier companies of three regiments together with a battalion of Royal Americans embarked. The first attempt to get the convoy of seven ships past Quebec did not succeed, but it got through during the night of 18 July without significant damage, although the French fired a number of shots at it.

On the following day, Wolfe told Monckton to be ready to march his brigade upstream along the south bank of the river for about four miles to Goreham's Post where they would embark in flat-bottom boats and cross onto the north bank under cover of the ships that had passed up the river the previous evening. On arrival he was to entrench himself across the road which ran along the north bank into Quebec. He also told Townshend to be ready to remove his brigade from the camp by the side of the Montmorency River and sail upstream to join Monckton if the landing was successful.

By this time the French were getting nervous about the situation above Quebec, as a result of the passage of the ships and of the activities of a small detachment of Royal Americans who had raided across the river at the Pointe aux Trembles nearly 25 miles above the city. The road along the north bank and the river itself constituted Montcalm's supply line and link with the other French forces around Montreal. As result, although reluctant to detach any of his French regular soldiers from his main position, Montcalm sent a detachment of 900 Canadians to hold the heights above the city.

On 21 and 22 July bad weather prevented all military activity and on 23 July weather and tide frustrated an attempt to get further ships up the river. It would seem that the combination of French reinforcement, together with the problems of

moving ships upstream, caused Wolfe to make a further postponement of the attack from above Quebec: it is probable that Saunders influenced him in this direction. As an alternative, Wolfe decided to mount an attack on Montcalm's left flank where it rested against the Montmorency River, since it was by now clear that nothing was going to tempt Montcalm into leaving his entrenchments and Wolfe was determined to bring him to battle as soon as possible. At the same time it is clear that Wolfe and Saunders continued to feel that an attack from above the city might ultimately be necessary and Admiral Holmes was sent up by land to take command of the various ships that had succeeded in working their way above Quebec.

The plan for the attack which took place on 31 July was for Townshend's brigade and Murray's brigade, both of which were already on the north bank of the St Lawrence, to ford the Montmorency at low water and attack Montcalm's left-hand redoubt. Monckton's brigade would detach one regiment to make a feint upstream along the bank of the St Lawrence in order to try and persuade Montcalm that the main attack was coming from that direction, as originally intended. The remainder of the brigade would be brought by boat from Point Levis and deposited on the Beauport shore to join the other two brigades in their attack on the redoubt. Once the redoubt was carried, Montcalm would be obliged to emerge from his remaining entrenchments to counter-attack it and this would give Wolfe the chance for which he was waiting to destroy Montcalm's main force. The whole operation would be covered by naval gun-fire from a warship in the mouth of the Montmorency and from small boats called cats.

In the event the attack went badly wrong, despite the fact that the diversionary manoeuvre above Point Levis succeeded in drawing off a detachment of Montcalm's force. The trouble arose from the fact that Monckton's brigade had great difficulty in getting ashore because of underwater ledges of rock, and suffered a lot of casualties in the process. At the same time the redoubt was well covered by fire from other

French positions, contrary to what Wolfe thought, and it could not be held. As a result the troops who took it did the only thing possible, which was to mount an immediate attack on the next position which was overlooking it. But their attack coincided with a storm that soaked their powder and, in any case, the position was too strong to be carried by an impromptu attack, so Wolfe called off the whole operation. By the end of the day all three brigades were back in their original camps having suffered 450 killed or wounded. The battle was not a disaster, but was none the less a distinct set-back and it resulted in some dissension between Wolfe and his subordinates.

Five days later Wolfe sent Murray upriver with 1,200 men to join the ships that were already there under Admiral Holmes. They were together instructed to destroy French magazines above Quebec and to operate for many miles upstream in order to cut the French supply lines and destroy their stores. At the same time, Townshend, who was still encamped on the banks of the Montmorency River, was told to send detachments into the surrounding countryside to destroy crops and farmsteads for the purpose of causing the Canadian militiamen to desert in the interest of looking after their farms and families. Such action would also reduce food stocks that could be used for sustaining French forces and the citizens of Quebec. Wolfe hoped that pressure imposed in this way might induce Montcalm to attempt a set-piece battle rather than to sit and watch his forces and supplies melt away. All of this greatly worried the French, and Montcalm sent a further 700 men under one of his most reliable officers to reinforce his position above Quebec.

No major battle was fought during the month of August. Holmes and Murray did considerable damage to the French by carrying out a number of raids, including one on 17 August, which destroyed a major stores and ammunition depot about 35 miles above Quebec. During the second half of the month Wolfe shifted some of his artillery from the Montmorency camp to the Pointe aux Peres and made other adjustments indicating that he was thinking of abandoning

the area. There is little doubt that Wolfe had no desire to carry out another major operation in the Montmorency area, but it would seem that Saunders and the brigadiers were still wary of a major operation being undertaken above Quebec. Although the French situation was rapidly deteriorating as a result of shortages of all sorts and a general falling of morale, the British, too, were concerned that Quebec was still holding out and that the nights were drawing in. In fact, no further major operation was possible until Murray returned with his brigade from the upper river and, although by the third week in August Wolfe would have liked him to return, contact with him had been lost.

At this point it is worth mentioning certain aspects of Wolfe's method of command. He was immensely energetic and never stopped visiting his various detachments in order to be at the critical spot at the right moment. As a result, he was not only able to deal with each tactical crisis as it arose, but he was constantly being seen by his officers and men who had great confidence in him, even when things were going badly. In the course of his visits he paid particular attention to such matters as the feeding and sanitary arrangements, even to the extent of being considered something of a crank by the senior officers. But this attention to detail ensured that the force as a whole remained far healthier than was usual in the eighteenth century and it also added to the regard in which he was held by the soldiers.

Another facet of his system of command was the attention he paid to the gathering of intelligence and the guarding of his plans. It was, in fact, easier than usual for both sides to discover what the other was doing, because nearly everything that either side did was in full view of the other. This meant that deception depended on elaborate plans designed to conceal the true purpose of observable movements. A steady trickle of genuine deserters and prisoners provided intelligence to fill the gaps, and false information was deliberately planted by men who pretended to desert. One way or another it was difficult for either general to keep his intentions secret from his opponent once he started to issue instructions. In

Wolfe's case, considerations of security prevented him from confiding in his brigadiers to the extent needed for retaining their trust. Furthermore, the feints and deceptions he used to confuse Montcalm gave an impression of vacillation and lack of decision to those working closely with him, although he never lost the confidence of his troops.

On 22 August, Wolfe became seriously ill and although Murray reappeared with his brigade at Goreham's Post on 24 August, Wolfe was not in a condition to take advantage of the fact. After a few more days, Wolfe realized that events could not wait on his recovery and he reluctantly instructed the three brigadiers to meet with the admiral to decide on what should happen next. In the letter which he sent to them convening this conference, he suggested three possible ideas for a further attack on Montcalm's Beauport position, two of which were obviously impractical and the third no better than the plan that had failed at the end of the previous month. It has been suggested that his purpose was to demonstrate the hopelessness of the Montmorency option in order to get the admiral and the brigadiers to suggest the very thing that they had been reluctant to undertake for so long, that is to say, an attack upstream of Quebec. If this is what he wanted, he achieved his object.

The plan proposed by the brigadiers was for the abandonment of the Montmorency camp. Small garrisons were to be left on the Isle of Orleans and at Point Levis. The rest of the army would move upstream as far as Cap Rouge and land there, subsequently advancing down the north bank of the river towards Quebec. Wolfe considered this to be impracticable, but permitted the preliminary moves to go ahead since they fitted well enough with the plan he intended to put into effect. In his usual way he kept this very much to himself to prevent word of it leaking out to the French.

By the beginning of September Wolfe had recovered. On 2 September he ordered the final withdrawal from the Montmorency camp, the troops being taken by boat to Point Levis. Montcalm tried to interfere with this movement by mounting an attack on the last brigade as it moved out, but soon

withdrew to his original position when Wolfe and Saunders embarked troops from Point Levis and threatened a landing in Montcalm's rear.

On 5 and 6 September the first part of the brigadiers' plan had been implemented and all the troops, less the detachments left to guard the Isle of Orleans and Point Levis, were concentrated with Holmes's ships above Quebec opposite Cap Rouge. They were shadowed on the north bank by the troops that Montcalm had sent there to guard against Wolfe's earlier threat in that area. Montcalm still thought that the main British attack would come in the Beauport area and kept most of his army concentrated there. Even if the British did intend to land above Quebec he reckoned that they could not do so any closer to the city than Cap Rouge because of the woods and cliffs and if they were to land at Cap Rouge he would have ample time to move his men from Beauport into a defensive position above Quebec before the English arrived. This is exactly what would have happened if the English had landed at Cap Rouge and it constituted the weakness of the brigadiers' plan.

But Wolfe had no intention of carrying out the brigadiers' plan. On 7 September he issued orders for a landing which went into detail regarding the sequence of disembarkation, but which omitted mention of time or place. Some troops were rowed around in boats to make the watching French suppose that a landing might be imminent. At the same time, Wolfe and the brigadiers went on an ostentatious reconnaissance of the river upstream of Cap Rouge. Next day, Wolfe went by himself to take a look at the north bank below Sillery. On 10 September he carried out another surreptitious reconnaissance of the area below Sillery with the brigadiers and at last explained the details of his plan, which involved landing at a cove called the Anse de Foulon, which was only about 1½ miles above Quebec. A narrow track led up the cliffs to the area above, known as the Heights of Abraham. Although guarded by a French post of around 100 men, Wolfe considered that it would be possible to overcome it by stealth and deception.

During the evening of 12 September, the troops got from the ships into the boats. In the early hours of 13 September, the three brigades slipped quietly downstream with the tide, landed and overpowered the guard at the top of the cliffs. By 6 a.m. Wolfe's whole force, which had been joined by the considerable garrisons left on the Isle of Orleans and at Point Levis, was concentrated on the Heights of Abraham. Wolfe then chose and occupied the best piece of land on which to fight the battle, which was within a mile of the city walls.

Meanwhile the French were dispersed and confused. The majority were still in the Beauport position, having been kept there to the last by a deception plan implemented by those English ships remaining below Quebec, designed to show that the objective of Wolfe's force remained a landing on the Beauport shore. But by now, Montcalm's force had become widely dispersed with a large detachment watching the English ships at Cap Rouge, and smaller ones in the upper river and at Sillery. In fact, another deception plan put into effect by Holmes's ships, after the troops had left them during the night, had enticed the French at Cap Rouge even farther upriver.

Once it became clear to Montcalm that Wolfe was outside Quebec in force, he collected as many French and Canadian soldiers as possible, together with a detachment of Indians, and moved to confront Wolfe. He could not afford to wait for the detachments above the city to join him, as it would have given Wolfe time to entrench his position. As a result, Montcalm attacked straightaway and, although numerically he had a slight advantage, the quality of his motley collection was no match for Wolfe's well-trained regular soldiers. The battle, which lasted for about a quarter of an hour, resulted in the complete destruction of Montcalm's force. Both Wolfe and Montcalm were killed, but the British took Quebec and the aim of the campaign was achieved.

For the purposes of this demonstration, four separate plans will be extracted from the narrative and examined briefly in the light of the principles of war. These plans are, first,

Wolfe's plan for the campaign as a whole, second, Montcalm's campaign plan, third, Wolfe's plan for the Montmorency battle and, finally, Wolfe's plan for the decisive battle under the walls of Quebec.

Wolfe's overall plan of campaign can be summarized as follows. His aim was to capture Quebec. His initial deployment was one brigade to the Isle of Orleans, one to a camp set up to the east of the Montmorency River and one to Point Levis. His immediate action was to bombard the French positions around Quebec, to carry out probes and reconnaissance in order to discover weaknesses in the enemy position, with particular emphasis on passing ships upstream of Quebec, and to carry out raids on the French lines of communication with a view to weakening the French and Canadians in the vicinity. His ultimate desire was to attack the French at a place to be decided on in the light of the probes and reconnaissance, meanwhile he intended to keep his soldiers well fed and occupied, and he took steps to ensure that the personal bonds that had developed between his officers and men and those of the navy remained intact.

A quick run-over of this plan, to see how well it conforms to the principles of war, would show the following.

Surprise and Flexibility Wolfe's greatest asset was his ability to move rapidly from one part of the front to another and thereby to achieve surprise, providing that he stayed close to the water. Had Wolfe tried to mount a land campaign based on outflanking Quebec or taking it from the rear, he would have forfeited this advantage, but his plan was firmly based on exploiting it to the full.

Concentration of Force and Economy of Effort Other advantages achieved from basing his plan on making maximum use of the river, were that Wolfe would be able to concentrate his force quickly where he wished to do so, while at the same time he would be able to disperse the enemy by the use of small diversionary parties, or ships, which could themselves return to the critical point more quickly than could the enemy.

Morale and Co-operation Wolfe's plan included many measures designed to maintain morale and separately many measures designed to ensure full co-operation between the various components of his force and the navy. These measures, which were promulgated in specific instructions issued by Wolfe, should not be confused with the actions that he took personally as the campaign developed.

Security and Administration Wolfe's plan was based on maintaining a number of camps which would be secured largely by the navy's control of the river. As a result of his plan he could reasonably expect to be able to develop his operations without having to forfeit concentration of his force when he wished to do so, for fear of losing any of the points that he wished to retain. Likewise, his administrative arrangements, which were detailed and effective, were based on a sea-and-river line of communication that was absolutely secure for as long as the river remained free of ice.

Maintenance of the Aim and Offensive Action The aim had been clearly set by the government and the plan was firmly based on its achievement. The plan was based from the start on taking offensive action: there was never any question of waiting for Montcalm to act.

It is very unusual to find a plan where all the principles of war can be favoured and where none has to be sacrificed for the sake of others. But Wolfe's plan of campaign was one such example. Any staff officer checking it to establish the extent to which it conformed to the principles of war would have to have given it full marks.

Next to be considered is Montcalm's plan for the defence of Quebec which can be summarized as follows. His aim was to prevent Wolfe from capturing Quebec until the onset of winter obliged the British force to withdraw. To this end he planned to evacuate his forces from the south bank of the river and spread them out along the north bank, with the exception of his nucleus of French regular soldiers who were to be held concentrated and entrenched in an area from which

they could move to reinforce any place being attacked. Montcalm's plan included provision for the building of bridges across the rivers that intersected the north bank, to facilitate rapid movement of his regulars, and it also included strengthening the defences of Quebec itself and of his main position along the Beauport shore. Offensive arrangements were largely limited to preparing fires hips and rafts to float down on to British shipping.

A quick examination of this plan to see how well it conformed with the principles of war would show the following.

Selection of the Aim, Maintenance of Morale and Offensive Action By selecting an aim that involved waiting for winter and which precluded much use of offensive action, Montcalm ran a grave risk in terms of maintaining morale.

Concentration of Force, Economy of Effort and Flexibility Montcalm could not have produced a plan that took greater regard for the needs of concentration without reducing the area to be defended, which could only have been achieved by abandoning the Beauport shore and by holding a main position behind the St Charles River. This would have brought the British too close to Quebec itself for safety. His plan took account of economy of force and flexibility to the extent that it provided for a sensible balance to be kept in the use made of the regular troops and the Canadians, and it included arrangements such as the building of bridges to assist the rapid movement of troops which were the best available in view of the likely enemy command of the river.

Administration The main administrative measure was to be the location of most of the store and supply depots afloat in the upper reaches of the river beyond where British ships could sail, and the protection of the line of communication to them. This conformed, as far as possible, with the principle.

Security The obvious aspects of security, such as the building of fortifications, v/as well catered for, but the more important aspect of the business, the ability to concentrate at a critical point without leaving an opening to the faster-moving British force, was more difficult to provide against. All that

can be said is that Montcalm's deployment made the best of a difficult situation.

Surprise No significant provision was made for achieving surprise in the plan, although efforts were made to deceive Wolfe as the campaign developed.

Co-operation Relationships between Montcalm and Vaudreuil and between the French and the Canadians were appalling. No arrangements were made in the plan for improving them, but in all probability none was possible.

Montcalm's basic problem was one of selecting an aim that balanced the requirements of the principles of concentration, economy of force, flexibility and administration on the one hand, against those of offensive action and the maintenance of morale on the other. If the whole force had been composed of French regular soldiers, Montcalm's plan might have represented a good balance. But, bearing in mind the fact that the majority were poorly-trained Canadians, it might have been safer to forestall a likely melting away of his force, as the Canadians returned home to look after their domestic affairs, by selecting an aim of defeating the British in a battle brought about by bold offensive action, using maximum surprise at the expense of some security. Admittedly, the relationship that existed between Montcalm and Vaudreuil and the respective authority held by each may have been such as to preclude such a plan. All that can be said is that an examination of Montcalm's plan in the light of the principles of war would not have given much cause for optimism.

The next plan for consideration is the one made by Wolfe for the Montmorency battle, which can be summarized as follows. The aim was to seize and hold the high ground on the extreme left of Montcalm's position, with a view to forcing Montcalm into attacking him under favourable circumstances. The plan called for the two brigades in the Montmorency camp to ford the river at low tide and to assault the objective in company with the third brigade, which would have been landed by boats from Point Levis. Covering fire

would be provided by a ship situated in the mouth of the Montmorency River and from small craft floated as close as possible off the Beauport shore.

An assessment made in the light of the principles of war would look like this.

Selection of the Aim The aim could only be regarded as correct if its attainment would lead to the furtherance of the aim of the campaign as a whole. Even if the initial objective had been captured and held, it would still have been possible for Montcalm to have moved back into well-entrenched positions slightly closer to Quebec, without, in fact, attacking Wolfe's army. At the end of the day, Wolfe might have been no better off and, as the attacker, he could expect to sustain higher casualties than Montcalm. Only if Montcalm launched a major counter-attack could Wolfe expect to make significant progress towards achieving his overall aim.

Offensive Action and Maintenance of Morale The offensive nature of the operation, undertaken by confident troops after a long period of probing and reconnaissance, would certainly mean that the men would go into battle in an excellent frame of mind.

Concentration of Force, Economy of Effort and Security Wolfe's plan would result in the concentration of a high proportion of his force, while a small and economic upstream demonstration could be relied on to prevent Montcalm from being reinforced from the detachments he had deployed there. The navy were fully capable of ensuring the security of the bases he had been obliged to weaken in order to concentrate his force.

Surprise Surprise would inevitably be lost when the enemy saw Monckton's brigade moving in boats from Point Levis towards the Beauport shore. Considerations of movement times in conjunction with the time of low water made it impossible to avoid this.

Flexibility and Co-operation The plan extracted maximum advantage from the flexibility provided by the navy and the command arrangements, i.e. the positioning of the general,

the admiral and the subordinate commanders ensured that effective co-operation between the various elements of the force could be achieved.

Administration There were no administrative difficulties about the plan.

In terms of the principles of war the main weakness of the plan lay in the sacrifice of surprise that was necessary in order to make best use of flexibility and to achieve an adequate concentration of force. But it is rare not to have to make some such sacrifice and a person analysing the plan purely in relation to the principles of war would have a right to consider it a good bet so far as achieving the original objective was concerned. But in terms of the aim of the operation, that is to say, of bringing Montcalm to battle under favourable circumstances, the plan was less likely to succeed. It seems more likely that Montcalm would merely have entrenched himself slightly nearer to Quebec and left Wolfe to stage another costly attack later on. In the event, Wolfe did not even succeed in taking and holding the target area for reasons unconnected with the principles of war, i.e. because Monckton's brigade could not be disembarked at the right time; because the objective turned out to be covered by fire from another French position, contrary to Wolfe's earlier judgement; and because the weather made further fighting impossible at a certain stage in the battle. As a result of this it is impossible to check the validity of the assessment made in the light of the principles of war, by reference to the way in which the operation developed, although this does not detract from the value of making the assessment.

The last plan to be looked at is the one which Wolfe made for the attack on the Heights of Abraham. The aim was once more to beat Montcalm in battle in order to take Quebec. Preliminary moves included dispersing Montcalm's forces by harrying the countryside both upstream and downstream of Quebec, e.g. raiding depots, destroying crops, etc. Concentration was to be achieved by moving all three brigades

upstream with part of the fleet to a position off Cap Rouge and then drifting them down by night to the Anse de Foulon landing-place where they would be joined by the remaining garrisons from the Isle of Orleans and Point Levis. The assembled force would then carry the Heights by force and form up in battle array on the best field of battle that could be found, so close to the city that Montcalm would be obliged to attack before Quebec became fully invested. A diversion by the navy and the batteries left on the Isle of Orleans would cause enough activity around the Beauport shore, thereby ensuring that Wolfe had time to deploy his force to maximum advantage. A reserve of supplies would be dumped at Goreham's Post, nearly opposite the Anse de Foulon, to enable Wolfe to operate for a number of days if necessary, even if temporarily cut off.

An assessment of this plan in the light of the principles of war is as follows.

Concentration of Force and Economy of Effort The initial action above and below Quebec with its consequent weakening and dispersion of enemy forces should enable the major concentration achieved by Wolfe to result in a battle in which Montcalm's large numerical superiority would be reduced to reasonable proportions, thus giving Wolfe a great qualitative superiority at the point of battle, providing that he was not held up in his move from the cove to the top of the cliffs.

Surprise Carrying out the concentration noislessly in the dark by dropping down with the tide, combined with the diversion staged by the navy and the batteries in the Beauport area, should enable Wolfe to expand his bridgehead on to the Heights of Abraham and to prepare his force to engage Montcalm without too much interference.

Security and Administration There would be a risk to the security of the whole force if Wolfe was to suffer a reverse on the Heights of Abraham, since the French would be able to cut him off from his supply line both upstream to Holmes's ships and downstream to the Isle of Orleans. The risk was reduced by the dumping of supplies at Goreham's Post.

Selection of the Aim There is no question that the aim selected is totally in line with the overall aim of the campaign, since, if achieved, it could not fail to bring the campaign to a successful conclusion.

Offensive Action, Morale, Flexibility and Co-operation All these principles are amply catered for in the plan.

Some sacrifice in terms of security and, to a lesser extent, administration was made in order to favour all the other principles of war. The operation was more of a gamble than was the attack at Montmorency because it would have been more difficult to extract the force if it proved impossible to deploy before being attacked by Montcalm, or if the subsequent battle was indecisive or a defeat. But in view of the fact that winter was approaching, and that a decisive blow could not be further delayed, a risk had to be taken somewhere. An assessment made on the basis of the principles of war, would definitely have shown that this risk was well worth taking.

Notes

The author carried out no original research in preparing the narrative section of this appendix which is based on three works:

- 1 Robin Reilly, *The Rest to Fortune*, Cassell, London, 1960.
- 2 Christopher Hibbert, *Wolfe at Quebec*, Longman, London, 1959.
- 3 John Knox, edited by Brian Connell, *The Siege at Quebec and the Campaigns in America*, Folio Society, London, 1976.

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