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Phillip S. Meingers neue «Principles of War»

Am 22. und 23. August 2007 organisierte die Royal Air Force in Cranwell, United Kingdom, eine Konferenz mit folgendem Titel: «Air Power, Insurgency and the War on Terror». Über den Inhalt der Konferenz wird die ASMZ nach der Freigabe der Dokumentationen berichten. Lediglich ein bemerkenswerter Vortrag aus der erwähnten Konferenz soll heute in dieser Ausgabe der ASMZ besprochen werden: In einer «Keynote Address» hielt Dr. Phillip S. Meinger (siehe Kasten) ein Referat mit folgendem Titel: «Starting with a Blank Sheet: Principles of War for a New Century».

Phillip S. Meinger*

Nach einem Exkurs in die Geschichte der grossen Feldherren und Strategen präsentiert Meinger die zehn Prinzipien von Jomini:

1. Take the initiative
2. Attack the enemy's weakest point
3. Attack the extremities of enemy's position
4. Concentrate for ease and rapid movement
5. Force the enemy to commit errors
6. Know the enemy's position and intentions
7. Mass for effectiveness
8. Pursue the beaten foe
9. Morale is important
10. In Sum: occupy favorable positions, move quickly, and hit hard

Weil Jomini in einer leicht verständlichen Sprache kommunizierte und er in Französisch schrieb – damals die *lingua franca* für den Westen – war sein Einfluss relativ gross. Clausewitz dagegen schrieb in komplizierten, sich oft wiederholenden Sätzen auf Deutsch. Später war J.F.C. Fuller, ein britischer Army-Offizier, ein wichtiger strategischer Vordenker. Fuller publizierte 1916 folgende «Principles of War»:

1. Objective
2. Offensive
3. Mass
4. Economy of Force
5. Movement
6. Surprise
7. Security
8. Cooperation

Die 1949 gegründete Teilstreitkraft U.S. Air Force gab sich folgende «Principles of War»:

1. The will to win rapidly
2. Singleness of Purpose
3. Coordination of ends and means
4. Principle of Indirect Approach
5. Surprise – alternative objectives
6. Intelligence
7. Air supremacy

Meinger argumentiert nun, dass sich seit 1949 sehr vieles geändert habe. Man könne weder die Prinzipien von Jomini

noch jene von Fuller, aber auch nicht diejenigen der USAF von 1949 weiterverwenden. Er erwähnt die technologische Entwicklung, die Revolution im Cyberspace sowie die neu entdeckte Bedeutung der Homeland Security. Diese neuen Elemente zwingen zu einer Neuformulierung der Kriegsprinzipien. Meinger schlägt die folgenden zehn «New Principles of War» vor (siehe Grafik unten):

Air-, Space-, Cyberspace- and Naval Supremacy

The US and its closest allies have come to depend upon – to assume – the dominance noted here, and they do so for good reason. The US Army has not had to fight without air superiority since Kasserine Pass in 1943. It has not lost a soldier to an enemy airplane since 1953. It has never had to fire a surface-to-air missile at an enemy aircraft – the bad guys have never gotten that close. Our sea superiority has been equally impressive. Since the Battle of the Atlantic our dominance at sea has been unquestioned. We have been able to deploy

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forces worldwide, by air or sea, for over a half-century with virtually no losses. Once those forces have been established in theater, they have been resupplied, again by air and sea, largely unopposed.

Cyberspace is a new environment that is rapidly becoming a crucial front in modern war. There is a danger lurking in this new arena. Because it is such a new field, dependent on brain power as much as industrial might, it is a prime area for potential adversaries to seek an asymmetric advantage. We cannot allow that to happen.

New Principles for New War

1. Air, Space, Cyberspace and Naval Supremacy
2. Homeland Security
3. Unity of Command
4. Integration
5. Jointness
6. Intelligence
7. Netcentricity
8. Mobility
9. Precision
10. Media Awareness and Initiative

Homeland Security

The terrorist attack of 9/11 was the worst assault on the US mainland in history. Airpower, in the form of commandeered civilian airliners, killed over 3,000 innocent civilians in two attacks on New York City and the Pentagon. One result has been the establishment of a huge apparatus – the Department of Homeland Security – of Cabinet-level rank that has responsibility for thwarting future attacks. The devastating terrorist attack on the London subway system in July 2005 was no less horrific.

Certainly, home defense has always been a major component of our defense policy – and of every other country for that matter – but new terrorist threats demand a totally different response. Internal police forces, border patrols, or intelligence agencies like the FBI are no longer adequate to defend against the worldwide and networked terrorist forces arrayed against us. Entirely new technologies like unmanned air vehicles, information warfare and computer self-defense systems have been built to conduct this new fight. And new intelligence-gathering and analysis organizations have been created to track down the terrorists in our midst and prevent their attacks before they occur.

Unity of Command

The demands of theater-wide warfare necessitate unity of command due to the increasingly long ranges and responsiveness of the weapons at a commander's disposal. Aircraft can travel hundreds of miles in minutes to deliver ordnance, and space assets can sense an entire theater during a single pass. When such systems can see or shoot at continental distances, there must be a guiding hand to ensure those systems are operating in a coordinated and seamless fashion to achieve a specific purpose.

The demands of unifying and focusing the efforts of several military services – from several different countries in the case of a coalition – while at the same time controlling and coordinating the efforts of non-military agencies so as to ensure a holistic strategy and policy, demands that a single individual be in charge. Although this will not ensure that the resulting policy or strategy is the correct one – witness the events in Iraq during 2003 – such unity of command is a necessary if insufficient condition for success.

Integration

By this I mean the coordinated use of all levers of power – military, political, economic, psychological and cultural. As I have

noted, the new environment confronting us is marked by asymmetric actors and challenges. Although in the old era it was *wise* to use a combination of the levers of power, today it is *essential*.

For example, at the conclusion of military hostilities in 1991, General Norman Schwarzkopf went to the tent at Safwan to negotiate a cease fire with the defeated Iraqi commander. Schwarzkopf received virtually no guidance from the US State Department on this critical meeting. He was not prepared, and serious troubles resulted. War and its aftermath must be addressed by a *coalition* of agencies, not simply the military. Today, a concerted effort emphasizing experts and expertise from Defense, State, Treasury, Homeland Security, Intelligence, and perhaps Non-Governmental Agencies, will be needed to confront successfully the varied challenges now facing us.

Jointness

For centuries, the need for cooperation between the services was considered a sometimes desirable but seldom necessary occurrence. An exception was England where the British Way of War, as characterized by Basil H. Liddell Hart, was an indirect approach that relied on what could be termed peripheral operations. When the enemy – usually France – was too strong to confront head on, amphibious operations in a different theater – North America, the Middle East – were conducted instead.

In Lord Grey's lovely phrase: the British Army was to be a projectile fired by the Royal Navy. Not so in the US. For example, a main problem leading to defeat in Vietnam was the parochialism and sometimes childish rivalry that existed among the services. It was only further difficulties in war that forced reform and a move towards jointness. The move towards jointness occurred in Britain a bit earlier apparently due largely to fiscal constraints.

Intelligence

Today, the demand for intelligence is greater than ever while also more difficult to obtain. As our intelligence-gathering sensors and techniques have become better, so too have adversaries learned new tricks at hiding, camouflaging or distorting the objects we try to examine. At times, this can lead to disaster – as with «The Case of the Missing WMD» in Iraq. This means that the *type* of intelligence has changed. Just as the advent of airpower required a new type of *economic* intelligence, so now the asymmetrical warfare of insurgency and terrorism require *cultural* intelligence that our present

system is not equipped to collect. We simply do not know or understand the motivations of the Islamic radicals who seek to destroy us.

In addition, although we now have sensors that can detect objects, both moving and stationary, as well as intercept all types of electronic emissions, there are certain targets that still confound us. We need to detect the presence of all types of WMD – where they are made, stored and transported. Until we can do so, accurately and continuously, we will be unable to hold at risk the activities of rogue states who defy international sanctions and continue to pursue such weapons.

Netcentricity

This concept refers to the necessity to link together, on a global basis and in real time, the various intelligence-gathering sensors and C2 links that are deployed around the world. This linkage is now beginning. In Afghanistan and Iraq, for example, UAVs are being «flown» by pilots at consoles at airbases in the US. That is world war, in real time.

One of the dominant themes of modern war is speed. Everything happens faster than even a decade ago. The greatest venue for this revolution in speed takes place in air, space and cyberspace. «Near-real time» is a phrase used increasingly in air operations centers to denote the requirement for intelligence and communications almost as soon as an incident occurs.

I should also note there that there is an intrinsic tension between the principles of netcentricity and unity of command. The latter can be seen as fostering a more centralized view of command and control; whereas, netcentricity can often be viewed as an attempt to decentralize – to flow information downwards to the tactical level, allowing local commanders on the scene to make more timely decisions. This seeming paradox is not insoluble.

Mobility

The US believes that its interests are best defended as far from her shores as possible, so power projection is essential.

When one studies the quantity, quality and composition of air forces worldwide, a number of startling statistics become evident. First, with over 13,000 military aircraft, the US is by far the largest Aerospace Nation – Russia and China are next in line with barely a third of that total. Significantly, although the US Air Force with its 5,789 aircraft is the largest air arm in the world, the US Army and the US Navy are in the top five, and the US Marine Corps is not far

behind. Thus, despite talk of the importance of "boots on the ground," ships or submarines, the fact is that all of the US services put their money into airpower. But the statistics are in some ways even starker, as exemplified by the dominance the US enjoys in power-projection forces. There are slightly over 1,100 large cargo aircraft in the world – the US has over 700 of them (all in the USAF), which is 63% of the world total. There are also 825 aerial refuelers in the world: the US has over 700, or around 86% of the total. Most of the other large cargo planes and tankers belong to NATO countries. This air mobility force allows the US and its allies to project power anywhere in the world, rapidly, and, just as importantly, to *sustain* those forces for an extended period of time.

Precision

The development of precision guided munitions is one of the great military revolutions of our age. These weapons have generated fundamental revisions in the way we plan military campaigns. Beginning with Desert Storm in 1991, "Air-shaft accuracy" has become so routine it is now expected.

PGMs have reduced by orders of magnitude the number of sorties required to neutralize a given target. This reduction in sorties has a direct relation on the logistics tail required for an air campaign. Simply put, fewer weapons mean fewer sorties, which in turn mean fewer aircrew and maintenance personnel, less fuel, less ordnance, and fewer spare parts. These reductions cause a cascading effect on the number of support personnel required in-theater to supply and maintain these fewer

assets. Because many of these personnel and much of the materiel must come from the US, their reduction puts a correspondingly lighter load on the mobility forces that deploy and sustain these assets. PGMs are the gifts that keep on giving.

PGMs also ensure less casualties. Because they have such a high probability of success, generally only a single aircraft is needed to neutralize a given target. Compare this to the thousands of aircrew members who flew into harm's way in times past. PGMs also mean less collateral damage and fewer civilian casualties.

Media Awareness and Initiative

I am *not* advocating that the military manipulate or deceive the news media. My point is that today virtually everything we do will now be scrutinized by a skeptical news media over which we have no control.

Every bomb, missile, or bullet we fire can have political effects. When a bomb goes astray, a Tomahawk missile crashes into a hotel lobby, or an edgy soldier kills a civilian at a road-block, our *foreign* policy suffers a setback. We can no longer afford to miss. More than that, even when we hit the target, we have to do so almost softly and with minimal impact. One is reminded of TV Westerns many years back: the good guy – the one in the white hat – never killed the bad guy; he shot the gun out of his hand and arrested him. *That* is our new standard.

In a very real sense, photographs determine and shape our memory of the past. There are photos that spring to mind when one considers the Vietnam War, but I would venture that most of us would recall three images in particular: a Viet Cong terrorist

being executed with a shot to the head by a South Vietnamese general, shown here; a young girl, naked, running away in terror from a napalm strike; and an American soldier using his cigarette lighter to set fire to a hooch. None of these are images the American military would have chosen to depict their decade-long agony in Vietnam, but it didn't have a vote. Similarly, it is likely that the current war in Iraq will be forever linked with the photos of the abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib, and the image of a US Marine firing his rifle into a helpless Iraqi at his feet. These photos, which spread widely and quickly throughout the Arab world – have become a metaphor for our failed attempts to democratize Iraq.

Schlussbemerkung

Meilingers Überlegungen sind plausibel. Anzumerken ist, dass diese neuen Kriegsprinzipien vorläufig wohl nur für die USA anwendbar sind. Air-, Space-, Cyberspace- und Naval-Überlegenheit können in ihrer Gesamtheit heute nur die USA sicherstellen.

Es bleibt abzuwarten, ob in den nächsten Jahrzehnten andere Staaten auftauchen werden, welche in der Lage sein könnten, ähnlich hohen Ansprüchen zu genügen.

Ebenfalls erwähnen muss man, dass in der asymmetrischen Kriegführung gegen fanatische, zum Tod jederzeit bereite Kämpfer die neuen Kriegsprinzipien keine Garantie für den Erfolg geben werden. Im Kampf gegen Terroristen gelten andere Prinzipien. Meilinger äussert sich dazu nicht. ■

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