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THE FOG OF RELEVANCY: A CASE FOR REVISING THE CANADIAN PRINCIPLES OF WAR

By Maj RW Ermel

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ABSTRACT

The ten principles of war which we hold extant in our Canadian Military Joint Doctrine were officially adopted in 1947 and since that time have remained unaltered. That said, the battlespace of the 21st century no longer resembles the one of the 20th century from which our existing ten principles of war sprung. Resultantly, a revision of our principles of war is long past due. The main thesis of this paper will be that the current Canadian principles of war must evolve in order to remain the philisophical bedrock of Canadian Military Joint Doctrine. As a result of review and analysis, it will be argued that the principles of war must be renamed the principles of conflict to recognize their applicability across the spectrum of conflict. Additionally, it will be recommended that the principles of cooperation, offensive action and concentration of force be replaced by new principles of *synchronization, initiative* and *relative superiority* while the remaining seven principles be retained unaltered. It will be finally proposed that a 11th principle of *legitimacy* be added to recognize the exingency of maintaining the public mandate in 21st century military operations.

THE FOG OF RELEVANCY: A CASE FOR REVISING THE CANADIAN PRINCIPLES OF WAR

> *"There are practical principles that can guide leaders to success. But those principles change from age to age. They are not immutable, because the factors that influence the conduct of armed violence are constantly evolving."*[1]
>
> *Robert R. Leonhard, Principles of War in the Information Age*

INTRODUCTION

Throughout recorded military history, there has been a philosophical belief that military actions should be subject to, and guided by, an underlying set of principles. The ten principles of war which we hold extant in our Canadian Joint Doctrine were officially adopted in 1947 and since that time have remained unaltered. There can be no doubt that these ten principles have served the Canadian military extremely well and have successfully underpinned critical thought of commanders and staffs at all levels. That said, and echoing Robert Leonhard's pronouncement above, principles of war are developed by man and not handed down by God and, as such, cannot be considered infallible or unalterable.

Since the codification of our current list of the ten principles of war over half a century ago, much has changed. The Industrial Age of the 20th century has given way to an Information Age in which participants seek to obtain and maintain knowledge dominance in order to achieve competitive advantage. Additionally, when our current principles of war were adopted, we believed that there were only two levels of war – the strategic and tactical.[2] We now embrace a

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[1] Robert R. Leonhard, *The Principles of War for the Information Age* (Navato, CA.: Presidio Press, 1998), 5.

[2] Department of National Defence, *Introduction to the Study of Military History for Canadian Students*, 6th ed, 4th revision, edited by Colonel C.P. Stacey (Ottawa), 147.

third intermediate level of war – the operational – which resides between the strategic and tactical. By adopting the operational level of war, we have, ipso facto, become practitioners of the operational art, replacing the attritionist method of war with a manoeuvrist approach to conflict.[3]

If one agrees that the Industrial Age, which gave birth to our current principles of war, has been surpassed by the Information Age, and, that our underlying doctrine, which flows from the principles of war, has changed significantly, then it follows that that our current principles of war codified over half a century ago have not evolved in lock-step. Of most concern is the fact that as innovation of thought and method both accelerate, we are becoming increasingly intellectually separated from our principles of war. Therefore this paper will posit that the "status quo" principles are no longer suitable to inform and guide Canadian military thought and planning. In fact, three of the ten principles have lost traction and relevance and require significant amendment. These principles were born in war and originally conceived to guide warfighting. In the 21st century, however, our doctrine recognizes that we now conduct military operations across a broad spectrum of conflict of which warfighting is only one component.

With this logic in mind, the main thesis of this paper will be that the current Canadian principles of war must evolve in order to remain valid, credible and relevant as the philosophical bedrock of Canadian Military Joint Doctrine. To this end, the current ten principles of war will be reviewed, analyzed and a new updated and revised list of 11 principles proposed. Additionally a case will be made for renaming the principles of war to reflect their applicability

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[3] Department of National Defence, B-GL-300-003/FP-001, *Command in Land Operation* , (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2007), 2-3.

across the spectrum of conflict. However, before presenting this analysis and subsequent recommendations, it is necessary to understand the origins of our current list.

AND THEN THERE WERE TEN – THE ORIGIN

At least as far back as 500 BC, military commanders and theoreticians such as Chinese general Sun Tzu have posited principles or preconditions to be adhered to in order to ensure success in battle.[4] By the 19th century, military thinkers Baron Jomini and Carl von Clausewitz had established two diametrically opposed views regarding the application of principles of war. A student of Napoleon, Jomini sought to impose scientific reductionism as a framework to employing principles of war. His study of Napoleon's campaigns led him to believe that principles could be scientifically applied to achieve victory. Conversely, if principles were not given appropriate consideration, defeat would be assured.[5] In other words, the Jominian school of thought holds that principles are a checklist of things a leader *must do* rather than a register of axioms to frame critical thought.

Clausewitz by contrast, believed that "principles…will not so much give complete instruction….as they will stimulate and serve as a guide for your own reflection."[6] In sum, Clausewitzian tradition views warfare as a human endeavour and therefore more of an art than a science: i.e. principles are descriptive rather than prescriptive. Noted Canadian military historian, Colonel C.P. Stacey provided further clarification on this point stating that "the

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[4] Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*. ed. James Clavell (New York: Dell Publishing, 1983).

[5] John Shy, "Jomini" *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*. ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1986), 145.

[6] Carl von Clausewitz, *Principles of War*, ed. and trans. Hans W. Gatzke (Harrisburg PA.: The Military Service Publishing Company, 1952), 11.

principles that guide action in war, whether strategical or tactical, are not laws...nor rules."[7] Stacey went on to suggest that the principles that apply to military operations are not scientific rules that will lead to a pre-determined result.[8] Rather, they are guides to thought (based on what has worked in the past) in the planning of an operation. This understanding of principles as guidance has permeated Canadian military thought since the 1930s. Noted American military theorist, Antulio Echevarria II, points out that it is the Clausewitzian view that has informed professional Western militaries in their formulations of principles of war and that "Clausewitz [is] indeed the father of the modern principles of war."[9]

In the spirit of guidance rather than prescription, eminent military theoretician Major General J.F.C Fuller was the first to codify modern Western principles of war. Between 1912 and 1916, Fuller developed what he considered to be an accurate listing and description of eight principles of war.[10] Notably, Fuller's eight principles were adopted verbatim by the British Army and published as the first principles of war in the 1932 version of British Field Service Regulations.[11]

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[7] Department of National Defence, *Introduction to the Study of Military History for Canadian Students*, 147.

[8] *Ibid*., 147.

[9] Antulio J. Echevarria II, "Chapter 3 – Principles of War or Principles of Battle?", in *Rethinking the Principles of War*. ed. Anthony D. McIvor (Annapolis, MD.: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 61.

[10] J.F.C. Fuller, *The Reformation of War* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1923), 28.

1932 British Principles of War	Montgomery's Principles of War: 1945	Current Canadian Principles of War: From 1947
• Maintenance of the Objective	• Air Power	• Selection and Maintenance of the Aim
• Offensive Action	• Initiative	• Offensive Action
• Surprise	• Surprise	• Surprise
• Concentration	• Concentration	• Concentration of Force
• Economy of Force	• Morale	• Maintenance of Morale
• Mobility	• Administration	• Administration
• Security	• Simplicity	• Economy of Effort
• Cooperation	• Cooperation	• Cooperation
		• Security
		• Flexibility

Table 1 – Development of British/Canadian Principles of War

Sources: J.F.C. Fuller, *The Reformation of War* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1923), 28.
Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, *High Command in War*. (Germany, 1945), 2.

During World War II, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery proposed an updated list of eight principles which retained only three of Fuller's principles and added five of his own making.[12] As Chief of the Imperial General Staff following World War II, Montgomery again revised the list in 1945, but re-instated six of Fuller's original principles, while adding three principles of his own: a new one - *selection and maintenance of the aim*; and two he had added previously - *administration* and *maintenance of morale*. Montgomery employed his power of position to influence adoption of this newly revised list and the following year, the Canadian Chiefs of Staff Committee adopted Montgomery's list *carte blanche* as doctrinal guidance for the Canadian Forces.[13] From this time forward, Montgomery's ten principles have been the foundation of Canadian Military Doctrine without alteration.[14]

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[11] Major-General W.H.S. Macklin, "An Introduction to the Study of the Principles of War", *Canadian Army Journal*, Second Printing, (1948), 6.

[12] Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, *High Command in War* (Germany, 1945), 2.

[13] Department of National Defence, *Introduction to the Study of Military History for Canadian Students,* 147.

Since the advent of the current millennium, there have been several papers written by Canadian military professionals and scholars proposing the need for a re-vamping/updating of the current principles, but, to date, there has been no institutional will to revisit them.[15] It would appear that the beliefs of two individuals – Fuller (1912) and Montgomery (1945) – have had an inordinate influence on how we view these principles. It is interesting to speculate on how these two professional critical thinkers, if alive today, would perceive our reluctance to adapt and evolve our doctrinal underpinnings, given the significant evolution of modern warfare in the 21st century. We should remember that even Montgomery himself claimed, in crafting the principles of war, that "he made no claim to infallibility or to immutability."[16]

PRINCIPLES REVISITED

The original list of the ten principles of war will now be analyzed against the current and future doctrinal needs of the Canadian Forces. Seven of the principles were determined to be still pertinent when considered against the 21st century spectrum of conflict and as such should be retained. That said, there are others that have definitely lost traction and relevance. This

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[14] As partner British Commonwealth militaries, Australia, Britain, Canada and New Zealand all adopted Montgomery's 10 principles of war between 1946-47. A survey of current doctrine (Australian Defence Doctrine Publication- Doctrine 2nd ed., British Joint Warfare Publication (UK) JWP0-01 2nd ed., Canadian Military Doctrine (CFJP-01) Study Draft 4, New Zealand Military Doctrine (NZDDP-D) 2nd ed.) indicates that all nations save Canada have replaced the principle of administration for the principle of sustainability. Other than this minor alteration in lexicon, none of the four nations have endeavored to substantively alter the original list demonstrating that the Canadian military is not alone in becoming intellectually separated from its espoused principles of war.

[15] From 2000 to 2006, the following professional Canadian military officers and scholars have argued for change: Colonel R. Brooks, Dr. David Harries, and Lieutenant Colonel S. Sharp. (R. Brooks, "The Principles of War in the 21st Century." Toronto: Canadian Forces College Advanced Military Studies Course Paper, 2000. David Harries, "Principles of War for the New Age," *Canadian Military Journal*, vol. 7, no. 3, (Autumn 2006): 51-58. S.J. Sharp, "Principles of War for Canada in the 21st Century." Toronto: Canadian Forces College Command and Staff Course New Horizons Paper, 2001.)

[16] John I. Alger, *The Quest for Victory: The History of the Principles of War* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982), 151.

section will conclude with the recommendations that the three principles of *offensive action*, *cooperation* and *concentration of force* need significant amendment and argue that a new principle, that of *legitimacy*, needs to be added. Additionally, it will be posited that the principles of war be renamed *principles of conflict* to recognize their applicability across the complete spectrum of conflict.

The Seven Still Valid Principles

Despite significant changes in the ways military operations are conducted in the 21st century, there remains an unchanging need to ensure that such operations are governed by a clearly articulated aim which is understood by all. Just as in ancient times, once an aim is selected, it must be maintained to ensure synchronization of effort and application of resources in the most efficient manner possible. Neither the introduction of the intermediate operational level of war, nor the introduction of innovative doctrine and new operational methods, has altered the requirement for adherence to the master principle of *selection and maintenance of the aim.* If anything, the increased dispersion of operations in the contemporary battlespace, coupled with the integration of non-defence partners in operations in a Whole of Government Approach that have simultaneous competing *foci*, reinforces the relevance of this principle.

Although technological innovation has allowed the introduction of unmanned combat systems to pervade the battlespace, military operations continue to be dominated by human endeavour. As such, *maintenance of morale* also remains germane. Increased battlespace dispersion and the complexities of the contemporary operating environment both produce significant stressors for individuals and collective organizations thus validating the applicability of this principle.

It can also be argued that the introduction of the operational level of operations and the operational art exacerbates the requirement for commanders to embrace significant flexibility of thought and application of fighting power in order to seize fleeting opportunities. Additionally, several renowned futurists such as the Tofflers, Martin van Creveld, and historian John Keegan have all offered substantial views as to what has changed in terms of contemporary military operations. Despite some dissimilarity in the thoughts advanced by these authors, on certain subjects there is a consensus that military operations today are significantly different than those of the past and that transformation will continue unabated.[17] In a climate of accelerating change therefore, it is clear that the principle of *flexibility* also retains a firm place on the list to ensure that contemporary and future commanders retain their ability to impose their will and keep pace with continuous transformation in the battlespace.

From the outset of the 21st century, professional Western militaries have placed significant emphasis on their ability to rapidly exploit technological advancements as well as to research and develop future capability frameworks to enhance technological development. Underscoring this need to continually leverage technology is a constant desire to obtain advantage over one's adversary and to dominate the battlespace.[18] This intent can be achieved by enablers such as rapid and focussed information acquisition, knowledge development and superior decision making ability. But advantage over an adversary is only of use if commanders are able to employ the principle of *security* to protect advantages accrued through technological development. Additionally, the contemporary operating environment of the 21st century

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[17] For example, see Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (Toronto: Collin Macmillan, 1991), John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War: Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1993).

[18] William T. Johnston, *et al*, *The Principles of War in the 21st Century*: *Strategic Considerations* (Carlisle PA. Strategic Studies Institute, 1995), 8.

continues to require that commanders at all levels consider security at all levels of war in order to retain their freedom of action. Extending this logic, military operations across the spectrum of conflict may require commanders to consider, in addition to their own security, the security of civilian populations and other non-military actors within an area of operations.

Despite the increased march of technological development, Clausewitzian tradition continues to teach that operations are just as much art as they are science and must consider the human dimension.[19] Consequently military operations must continue to embrace the principle of *surprise* in order to produce effects that are "out of all proportion to the effort expended."[20] By achieving surprise, commanders at all levels can produce results that confound an adversary's formulaic intent assessment and seek to achieve manouevre supremacy in the intellectual and moral domains.

Upon analysis, the principle of *administration* also remains intact.[21] The ability of commanders at all levels to appropriately resource, administer and sustain their forces in a timely fashion contributes to their ability to achieve and maintain superior operational tempo. Canadian operational experience gleaned from Afghanistan in the 21st century, continues to demonstrate that freedom of action is inextricably linked to the quality of administrative planning and support provided. As such, this principle is just as applicable today as when it was codified.

The final principle of war of the seven deemed still viable was *economy of effort.* This axiom continues to guide commanders in the judicious use of their resources and capabilities and

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[19] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 86.

[20] Department of National Defence, *Introduction to the Study of Military History for Canadian Students,* 148.

[21] Doctrinally, administration is now termed sustainment. Although the name of the function has changed, the underlying definition and guidance remains unaltered.

implies the calculated assumption of risk in order to prosecute successful military operations. If a commander is seeking to achieve a concentration of force or effects in a specific area, the commander will need to carefully apply economy of effort in other areas especially given finite resources and capabilities. As such, *economy of effort* remains a valid principle of war.

Principles of Conflict

Our current list of principles was born in war. Since its adoption in 1947, we have come to understand that military operations occur throughout a spectrum of conflict on which warfighting is only one part. Today our ten principles must doctrinally guide military thought for military operations across the complete spectrum of conflict but yet still bear the misnomer *principles of war*.

It is essential to realize that by retaining such a limiting label, *principles of war*, one restricts the evolution of principles that require broader refinement and definition to be relevant to all aspects of the spectrum of conflict. Therefore, in order to establish a broader framework of analysis, it is recommended that our principles of war be renamed *principles of conflict*.

Offensive Action

Our present definition of the *offensive action* principle of war holds that "offensive action is required in order to defeat an opponent [and] … is the necessary forerunner of success."[22] This definition goes on to suggest that *offensive action* is fixed in a symbiotic relationship with initiative and primarily has a kinetic focus. In other words, this principle, which verges on

[22] Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-000/FP-000, *Canadian Military Doctrine, CFJP-01 (Study Draft 4)* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2008), 2-4.

prescription, states that a military force must seize and maintain the initiative in order to undertake offensive action.[23]

Articulated in this fashion, a military practitioner seeking to employ this principle will be forced to seize initiative in order to generate offensive kinetic operations. But since we subscribe to the 21st century concept that military operations occur throughout the spectrum of conflict, how does this principle guide action during non-combat operations such as a humanitarian intervention? The truth is, that in its current form, *offensive action* can no longer be perceived within such a narrow construct.

If one accepts the Clausewitzian tradition underpinning our principles of war, then one is permitted to dismiss any principle viewed not germane to an operation. In accepting this logic however, one neglects the underlying foundation upon which this principle is built – that of initiative – first enunciated by Montgomery in 1945, but later replaced by him with *offensive action*. Although the current principle stresses initiative, it is overly prescriptive to suggest that initiative is *only* linked to offensive action. Simply put, this principle restricts a commander's freedom of action. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines initiative as "the power or opportunity to act before others do."[24] With such a definition in mind, one can clearly state that a military force can use initiative, not only to generate offensive action, but to initiate a whole range of supporting, complementary and defensive actions.

It also follows that initiative is inherently valid across all three levels of conflict (the tactical, operational and strategic), as commanders at all levels must be able to seize initiative by conceptualizing their end state. At the tactical level, initiative can be applied to all phases of

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[23] *Ibid*, 2-4.

[24] *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 5th ed., s.v. "initiative."

operations from the defensive to the offensive. At the operational level, it enhances a commander's ability to generate and maintain freedom of action whilst at the strategic level it can be the enabler that provides agility to military power, which can in turn reinforce other elements of national power. When seen through an institutional lens, initiative allows a military to leverage technological advancements and envision future opportunities in which the integration of new capabilities can be synchronized and exploited.

In sum, the principle of *offensive action* is excessively prescriptive given the new realities of the 21st century. As written, it limits commanders' freedom of action by restricting initiative only to offensive action. It is therefore recommended that the principle of *offensive action* return to Montgomery's first iteration of the principle of *initiative* first espoused in 1945.

Cooperation

Since its adoption, the principle of *cooperation* has provided yeoman service to military commanders. It has been characterized by "a unified aim, team spirit, interoperability, division of responsibility and coordination of efforts to achieve maximum synergy."[25] It should be noted that cooperation in tandem with other elements of national power as well as interoperability with allies, becomes critically important. This said, The Concise Oxford Dictionary informs us that to cooperate is to "work together towards the same end."[26] Thus, in a military context, cooperation can be said to be a primordial function that implores us to work cooperatively towards a common purpose. While an honorable aim, it is an unfinished thought if it is to be considered a valid axiom for operations in the 21st century.

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[25] Department of National Defence, *Canadian Military Doctrine, CFJP-01 (Study Draft 4)*, 2-4.

[26] *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 5th ed., s.v. "cooperate."

To suggest that *cooperation* is no longer required in the battlespace of the 21st century would be premature and unprofessional. What is required however is the need to take the sound logic on which this principle is based one step further. Cooperation between elements such as in a joint or combined force remains a given in order to achieve success. But what is also required now is the ability to coordinate and bring together other disparate elements of power in order to achieve effects greater than the sum of their total parts.

Doctrinally, we consider synchronization to be "the arrangement of military actions in time, space and purpose to produce maximum combat power at a decisive place and time."[27] Although this definition is extensive, it is too narrow to be applicable at all levels of conflict. There is a need for military leaders to arrange their actions not only with other military forces, but also with civilian entities such as non-governmental organizations, other government departments and international organizations for example. Although our current definition acknowledges that cooperation is required, it stops short of suggesting the need for synchronization between such entities.

In operations other than war, military forces frequently find themselves sharing overlapping and integrated responsibilities with non-military entities. Today's military leaders must be adept at understanding that cooperation within the current construct of the principle does not go far enough. For example, the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan operates a campaign plan with three lines of operation: security, governance and reconstruction and development.[28] Military commanders in this theatre, from the operational to the tactical

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[27] Department of National Defence, B-GJ-005-300/FP-000, *Canadian Forces Operations*, (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2005), GL-9.

[28] Small Wars Journal, "ISAF Campaign Plan Summary," http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2008/11/isaf-campaign-plan-summary/; Internet; accessed 15 April 2009.

level do not control a full suite of military capabilities and therefore are incapable of arranging required activities along all lines of operation such as governance and reconstruction and development in isolation. In order to achieve success in these various areas, commanders must not only cooperate and coordinate with other military forces and non-military entities. They must also seek to synchronize such activities along the various interconnected lines of operation in order to achieve campaign synergy.

The currently accepted principle of *cooperation* must evolve into a more encompassing and realistic axiom that caters to the increased role of the military forces in operations other than warfighting. Therefore it is recommended that the principle of *cooperation* be replaced with the principle of *synchronization*.

Concentration of Force

This dated principle of war has a very Clausewitzian origin and stems directly from his maxim of superiority in numbers. Specifically, Clausewitz professed "that as many troops as possible should be brought into the engagement at the decisive point."[29] For much of recorded military history, the physical massing of forces at a decisive time and place, as suggested by Clausewitz, was a requirement to achieve superiority and success. The experience on the Western Front in World War I pointed out that, although *concentration of force* was a necessity, it also conferred significant disadvantage for significantly concentrated forces as they were vulnerable to attack by massed artillery. It became a real concern in the nuclear age at the conclusion of World War II when weapons of mass destruction were introduced.

Retention of *concentration of force* as a principle of war, it could be argued, leads contemporary military commanders to believe they should fight an attritional battle in order to

[29] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, 195.

mass the effects of their forces. At its core, this principle retains a quantitative focus, where at a critical point, superiority of mass or effects is preferred. But our list of principles, to be relevant, have to be applicable throughout the entire spectrum of conflict in the 21st century, not just for warfighting, and in some instances "more" may not confer superior advantage.

American military theorist John W. Davis clearly states that massing forces in order to obtain superior force masks the fundamental truth of what Clausewitz meant regarding superiority in numbers. Highly influenced by the teachings of Sun Tzu, Davis states that "the goal [in military operations] is to win without having to fight, or if fighting, to do only that which allows one to win."[30] Strength is not only resident in numbers, he argues, but generated by the combination of the qualities of capabilities. If one follows his logic, then the focus need not be on quantitative dominance but on qualitative superiority relative to an adversary. History is replete with such examples: the defence of Rorke's Drift or both contemporary Gulf Wars where friendly forces did not enjoy quantitative dominance but were able to bring qualitative superiority to bear and achieve great success.

Special operations theorist, Vice Admiral William McRaven brings this logic to a holistic conclusion with his principle of *relative superiority*. He states that relative superiority is "a condition that exists when an attacking force, generally smaller, gains a decisive advantage over a larger or well-defended enemy."[31] The fact that McRaven was considering special operations forces when he coined this definition explains his qualification of smaller attacking forces and large defending forces. One can theorize that the essence of *relative superiority* is the ability of

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[30] John W. Davis, "Once and Future Principles of War," *The Officer*, 82, no. 1 (January/February 2006): 49.

[31] William H. McRaven, *SPEC OPS: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and* Practise, (Novato, CA.: Presidio Press, 1995), 4.

one force, regardless of quantity, to gain a qualitative advantage over an adversary leveraging other principles of war such as *surprise* and *security* and superior technology (shaped explosive charges during the raid on Eben Emael and the Martini-Henry breach loader at Rorke's Drift). In other words, one force gains superiority relative to an enemy by combining critical capabilities in order to exploit an adversary's critical vulnerabilities - a concept which resides at the root of the operational art.

Traditionally the principle of *concentration of force* has been paired with the principle of *economy of effort*. Given finite resources, selection of a main effort in one area requires economy in another. Replacing the principle of *concentration of force*, with *relative superiority* does not change this symbiotic relationship. In order to gain *relative superiority* over an adversary at one point still requires *economy of effort* at others.

The importance of achieving *relative superiority* is also applicable to all levels of conflict and across the entire spectrum of conflict. At the strategic level, relative superiority can be achieved by the design and resourcing of forces that are more agile, adaptable and innovative than those of an adversary. At the operational and tactical levels, it can be achieved by creative application of the operational art which seeks to attack an adversary's cohesion and will. It is therefore recommended that the principle of *concentration of force* be retired and replaced with the principle of *relative superiority*.

Legitimacy

In penning his treatise The Principles of War, Clausewitz theorized that a pivotal objective of war in order to establish legitimacy was "to gain public opinion."[32] He went on to elucidate that for a military force operating anywhere on the spectrum of conflict a core axiom is

[32] Carl von Clausewitz, *Principles of* War, 45.

the ability to make and retain a positive moral impression on a home nation's population by one's plans and activities.[33]

Today's draft Canadian Army Counterinsurgency (COIN) Operations doctrine espouses that the support of one's home population and campaign legitimacy are critical elements that enable the successful application of COIN operations.[34] As competition for population support is doctrinally considered a centre of gravity for both insurgency and counter-insurgency forces, the concept of legitimacy is essential for success. This quest for legitimacy is not confined to the population of the host nation in which military operations are conducted but can be extended to the home fronts of force-contributing nations as well. This later point is most recently exemplified by the West's desire to assemble coalitions of the willing and seek authority and legitimacy for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan through United Nations mandates.

Though we consider legitimacy as a requirement in COIN operations, its applicability as a guiding principle is relevant across the spectrum of conflict and at all levels of command. At the strategic level, civilian control of the military in all endeavours is of paramount importance in democratic societies. Therefore the primacy of "civilian control of the military, rigid adherence to the rule of law, and accountability of soldiers for their actions [is necessary to retain] domestic public opinion and the retention of legitimacy."[35] After all, a modern society's public opinion is key to the political mandate that authorizes a democracy's allocation of national military power

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[33] *Ibid,* 46.

[34] Department of National Defence, B-GL-323-004/FP003, *Counter-Insurgency Operations – Final Draft July 2007* (Kingston: Army Publishing Office, 2007), Ch:3 2/25.

[35] James D. Campbell, "French Algerian and British Northern Ireland: Legitimacy and the Rule of Law in Low-Intensity Conflict," *Military Review,* 85, no.2 (March/April 2005): 5.

to a campaign.[36] If legitimacy is lost, then use of military power has no moral basis and is *de facto* illegitimate. Although our existing principles of war may have been developed under the assumption that the decision to undertake military action was moral or legitimate, such an assumption is no longer valid.

One merely has to look at instances such as the Allied firebombing of Japan and Germany in World War II to see that although such actions were deemed acceptable when tested against a framework of moral relativism at the time, they were illegitimate in that they breached the Laws of Armed Conflict.[37] Based on these historical examples, it is disconcerting that the requirement to achieve *and* maintain legitimacy in operations was not considered when they were codified following World War II.[38]

Subject to the Laws of Armed Conflict, modern militaries are not just 'following the rules'. Rather, they are fulfilling the mandate given to them by their nation. By adhering to the Laws of Armed Conflict, military forces are already following an unstated principle of legitimacy. By acknowledging that *legitimacy* is a *principle of conflict*, we are also recognizing that information proliferation in the 21st century allows global constituents to view military activities and judge their moral component with minimal filtering.

At the operational level, the importance of *legitimacy* is equally significant. Writing on the importance of considering legitimacy and perceptions of legitimacy at this level, United States Air Force Brigadier General Charles Dunlap noted that:

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[36] D.J. Lambert, "Campaign Authority as a Framework in Operational Design" (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Command and Staff Course Master of Defence Studies Research Project, 2008), 80.

[37] R.W. Ermel, "Firebombs Over Japan: Ethically Wrong – Legally Unacceptable" (Toronto: Canadian Forces College Command and Staff Course Final Arbiter Paper, 2008), 11-15.

[38] To have done so may have constituted an admission of Allied guilt.

> "most of the opponents of the United States no longer pursue traditional military victory, *per se*. Instead, they try to get us to perceive that the goal no longer justifies the anticipated sacrifice…this is why managing perceptions among friend and foe is so important to 21st-century conflicts."[39]

Although Dunlap is speaking from an American viewpoint, such an assessment is equally applicable to Canada.

At the operational and tactical levels, retaining legitimacy is essential. We only have to look to our experiences in Somalia in 1993 where members of the Canadian Airborne Regiment (CAR) engaged in torture of detained Somalis. Although this may have been an isolated extraordinary instance generated at the lowest tactical level, the immediate perception in the minds of the Canadian government and people was that the overall operational level mission had lost legitimacy and subsequently brought the mission to an abrupt close. Furthermore, this incident resulted in a loss of confidence in the military institution and caused the removal of the CAR from the military establishment.

Legitimacy in operations is anchored by the Laws of Armed Conflict and by the public mandate bestowed on Western militaries. Additionally, other actors such as coalition partners, belligerents, adversaries and neutral groups all measure the professionalism of our forces by our ability to retain legitimacy in operations. It is therefore recommended that *legitimacy* be added to the *principles of conflict* in order to reflect this reality.

CONCLUSION

The battlespace of the 21st century no longer resembles the one of the 20th century which gave rise to our existing ten principles of war. Through operational necessity over the last half-century, military doctrine has evolved to a point where we perceive military operations as a

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[39] Charles J. Dunlap, NEO-STRATEGICON: Modernized Principles of War for the 21st Century" *Military*

framework of three levels, not just two, and view military operations across a spectrum of conflict in which warfighting is only one aspect. Yet with these paradigm shifts, the underpinning foundation of Canadian military doctrine – *the principles of war* - have remained unchanged. Understanding that principles are not flawless and are crafted by men based on experience, it is necessary to revisit them regularly to assess their relevance, just as it is prudent to adjust any doctrine whenever circumstances demand it.

When considering military operations across the spectrum of conflict in the battlespace of the 21st century, three existing principles require replacement. The outdated principle of *offensive action* should be replaced with the principle of *initiative*. Equally important is the fact that military forces at all levels of conflict need to synchronize, not merely cooperate, with military and non-military actors. Therefore, the principle of *cooperation* needs to be expanded in scope and re-named *synchronization*. The remaining principle that has lost significant traction in today's contemporary operating environment is the principle of *concentration of force*. Emanating from an Industrial Age mindset, this principle currently restrains commanders and planners from thinking qualitatively. Again, considering that force can be applied across the spectrum of conflict simultaneously on both the physical and psychological planes, it is recommended that the existing principle of *concentration of force* be replaced with the principle *relative superiority*. This will allow commanders to consider effects qualitatively and in direct relation to adversary vulnerabilities consistent with our doctrine of the operational art.

Finally, it is recommended that an additional 11th principle of conflict be added – the principle of *legitimacy*. It is legitimacy that gives a military the moral compass to operate in harmony with the Laws of Armed Conflict and public opinion.

Review, 86, no.2 (March/April 2006): 43.

A revision of our principles of war is long past due. The validity of our current principles in the 21st century should constantly be challenged. In this instance it has been shown that seven principles remain valid, three no longer have traction and that an 11th principle should be added. Additionally, the term principles of war should be re-labeled *principles of conflict* in order to recognize their broad applicability across the spectrum of conflict.

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