



Senior Officer Professional Digest

Selected readings from the world's military journals

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CONTENTS

<i>Terror's Source: The Ideology of Wahhabi-Salafism and its Consequences</i>	p. 3
Leveraging the Media	p. 4
Making NEC Worthwhile	p. 6
How Technology Failed in Iraq	p. 7
Joint Fires and Effects in the Heavy Brigade Combat Team	p. 8
Nonlinear; Noncontiguous Operations and the Control of Indirect Fires and Close Air Support	p. 8
Bad News: Should Media Manipulation be a Tool of War?	p. 10
Just War Criteria and the New Face of War: Human Shields, Manufactured Martyrs and Little Boys with Stones	p. 11
The Problem with Fourth Generation War	p. 11

Compiled by:



The CA's Introduction

Professional reading is a commitment to our Army's future. The Senior Officer Professional Digest (SOPD) has been designed to assist you to learn more about the issues that will shape the future of warfare. I commend the SOPD to you and ask that you make the time to read the articles and to reflect on their content.



Article	<i>Terror's Source: The Ideology of Wahhabi-Salafism and its Consequences</i>
Author	Vincenzo Oliveti
Publication Details	Amadeus Books, Birmingham, United Kingdom, 2002, 112pp.

SYNOPSIS

This book tries to explain the divisions within modern Islam that have led to the terrorist acts of al-Qa'ida. It closes with the strategies necessary to promote mainstream Islam as an alternative to Salafi extremism and an assessment of the environment one year on from 11 September 2001. The author achieves his objective in five stages. First, he identifies the ideological source of terror as radical Salafism. Second, he distinguishes it from 'orthodox' Islam. Third, he examines in detail the tenets of radical Salafism. Fourth, he warns of the dangers of its continued growth. And fifth, he prescribes how to combat and defeat the radical ideology.

Oliveti opens with an informative introduction to the 'House of Islam'. He argues that without this basic understanding it is impossible to know anything about the nature and behaviour of those who follow its doctrines. This section begins with an introduction to the essence and substance of Islam. It describes the three major principles, which are also the successive stages in leading a spiritual life. It explains that the traditional canon of Islam is a collection of sacred texts that have been accepted as authoritative and definitive. Islam is a written religion in which the principles of belief, practice, law, theology and doctrine are settled. As Oliveti's first chapter shows, while the religion seems fixed in time, there are various ways to ensure that it remains relevant to practitioners. However, there are limits beyond which it will not go. The author argues that radical Salafism is taking the religion beyond these limits. The chapter closes by providing a thorough outline of 'orthodox' Islam's origins and the doctrinal divisions within the faith. It finishes with the rise of Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter Two focuses on the doctrines and tenets of the Wahhabi-Salafis. The author argues that this group has 'new' doctrines, tenets and practices 'that have never been taken seriously in the history of Islam'. It explains how the Salafi ideology rejects 'orthodox' Islam. The author sums the doctrines of the Wahhabi-Salafi ideology as literalist, anti-reason, anti-culture, anti-traditional authority, internally unstable, aggressive and repressive. However, Wahhabi-Salafism is not murderous, and it strictly bans terrorism and the slaughter of innocent civilians. The author argues that it is the Salafi-Takfirism, an extreme minority within the Salafi movement, who sanction these activities in the name of Islam. The author points out, however, that one (Salafi-Takfirism) springs from the doctrines of the other (Wahhabi-Salafism).

Chapter Three explains the social and political circumstances that predispose many Muslims to be receptive to the ideas of Salafism. Chapter Four outlines the process by

which Salafi doctrine spreads. The author describes the power structure, funding, strategies and means by which Salafis dispersed their ideology throughout the world.

Oliveti finishes by arguing that Salafism is not ‘orthodox’ Islam. Indeed, when contrasted with ‘orthodox’ Islam, the Salafi ideology does not encourage positive behaviours in the community. The author argues that Salafism is ‘a reduction of Islam that focuses on politics and militancy rather than God’. It is the source of the more radical Takfirism. Oliveti outlines four ways to ‘check’ Salafism and ‘stop’ Takfirism; these are:

- Remove the factors that give rise to ‘the fertile soil of fundamentalism’.
- Put pressure on Saudi Arabia to stop the flow of funds to the Salafis.
- Prevent the Salafis from enacting their strategies of propagation and expansion.
- Ensure that Western countries support ‘traditional Islamic’ countries and their governments.

In the author’s words, ‘Salafism can be contained by an indirect attack on its causes, resources and ideas, in conjunction with a policy to support traditional Islam’s opposition to it’.

The book includes two appendixes and a postscript. Appendix I is ‘Usama Bin Laden’s 1998 Fatwa on Killing American Citizens’. Appendix II is the ‘Ancient Prophecies of Fundamentalism and Religious Decline: An Unlikely but Potent Potential Vaccine’. The latter includes extracts from Islamic literature that foretell the descent of Islam into literalism after a long period. These extracts form the basis of a counterargument that the author suggests ‘orthodox’ leaders might use to fight radicalism and inoculate the population against its rise. The postscript focuses on the changing and often troubled relationship between Saudi Arabia and the United States in the twelve months after the attacks of 11 September 2001.

Article	‘Leveraging the Media’
Author	Colonel Glenn Starnes, USMC
Publication Details	<i>Marine Corps Gazette</i> , February 2005, pp. 51–5

SYNOPSIS

The author of this article was the commander of the 1st Battalion, 10th Marine Regiment during *Operation Iraqi Freedom*. In this capacity he was able to witness at first hand the success of the embedded media program (EMP) adopted by the US military for the invasion of Iraq. Starnes believes that the EMP was a win–win situation for both the media and the military. His article records what worked and what might be improved for the future based on the experience of the EMP in *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

The article begins by noting that it was a decision made by the US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, to adopt the EMP. This decision was made on the basis that the technology now available to the media ‘would overpower military public relations efforts’. As Rumsfeld later told the US Service chiefs, ‘We need to tell the factual story—good or bad—before others seed the media with disinformation’. While many military leaders had difficulty accepting the idea that they could trust the media and give them unfettered access, ultimately Rumsfeld’s decision was proven to be correct. Unlike his manipulation of the media in the first Gulf War, in 2003 Saddam Hussein was unable to gain any propaganda victories. As the author points out, while the Iraqi Minister of Information told the world that coalition forces were nowhere near Baghdad, reporters embedded with the US Forces showed images of American tanks and troops entering the city.

Although military leaders had come to understand that the media has a role in information operations, the EMP demonstrated that, by working with the media, the coalition had been able to achieve information superiority over the Iraqis. Moreover, Starnes notes that, by sheer volume alone, the 6000 stories generated every week at the height of the conflict helped to maintain domestic public support for the operation and suppress dissent. Indeed, when most of the media departed Iraq at the end of the war, the military lost information superiority. Military public affairs officers in the stabilisation forces were too few to ensure that good-news stories, which had previously been observed at first hand by the embedded reporters, would be covered by the much smaller number of correspondents now based in Baghdad hotels.

In his conclusion, the author highlights a number of issues that the US military’s media policy must consider for the future. His belief is that EMP is a permanent feature; therefore the issues that he raises are areas where the EMP system used in *Operation Iraqi Freedom* requires improvement. The first issue raised is that of unilateral media—that is, reporters who were present on the battlefield, but not embedded. Unilateral media endanger themselves, but accept support and safety from the military and claim bias if they are shut out of interviews or fired on during operations.

Another issue is the need for the armed forces to account for and counteract the speed of real-time reporting and video images, especially when it comes to casualty reporting. Starnes believes that the military will risk its credibility if it is unable to do something that the media does easily. Finally, he thinks that the Defense Department must find a way to provide the media with the ability to offer strategic reporting and analysis. The EMP allows for excellent coverage of the tactical battle but does not provide strategic context. Images of halted supply vehicles or misquotes from field commanders can rapidly turn into bad-news stories without the ability to provide the media with reliable commentary, from informed personnel. This would allow the military to counteract what the author calls ‘the fast-forward mentality’ of a national audience conditioned to expect a steady flow of novelty from its media outlets. As an example, he notes that the ‘euphoria’ of liberating Baghdad lasted for one day’s news

cycle and then the media began to look for something new. The military still had some hard fighting in Baghdad and northern Iraq, but the media was already asking questions about the redeployment of forces and welcome-home parades.

Starnes concludes by saying that the task for the future is to ensure that both the media and the military work together in order to build on the successes of *Operation Iraqi Freedom* and correct or at least minimise those problem areas noted in the article.

Article	'Making NEC Worthwhile'
Author	Norman Friedman, independent defence analyst
Publication Details	<i>RUSI Journal</i> , vol. 149, no. 6, December 2004, pp. 42–6

SYNOPSIS

The article begins by noting the abstract nature of current descriptions of network-enabled or network-centric warfare. Without some concrete parameters, the author believes that it is not possible to understand what the term really means, let alone determine which technologies will be the most important in implementing network-enabled or network-centric methods of warfare. Indeed, Friedman feels that the terms 'network-enabled' and 'network-centric' are unfortunate and only add to the lack of clarity in the debate. In his opinion the term used should be picture-centric operations, because the central idea of this concept of warfare is that it will be based on a shared picture of a tactical situation. This picture is built up from a network of linked sensors and shooters that can be used to attack targets on the basis of the shared picture.

The article offers two models to advance the discussion of these types of operations. The first of these models is allegorical; the second, historical. The allegorical model is called 'The Beleaguered Sheriff' and uses the scenario of a lawman engaged in a saloon shootout with a notorious gunslinger. The point of this first allegorical model is that the picture-centric system is an enabler, not a weapon in itself. The second model is provided by the historical example of the Royal Navy before and during World War I. This was a period when the Royal Navy struggled to come to terms with new technology. As Friedman notes, Admiral Sir John Fisher greatly overestimated the potential of new technologies such as wireless. The fleet that Fisher built in the years prior to World War I was expensive, controversial within the profession, and still coming to terms with the use of its new capabilities when the war started. For that reason, while the Royal Navy's use of wireless as an intelligence tool was superior to that of the Germans, it was a capability that the fleet commander, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe, did not fully trust. In the evening after the Battle of Jutland, Jellicoe was given vital tactical information about the intention of the German High Seas Fleet, which he ignored because the same source had not been accurate in the lead-up to the battle.

Friedman's conclusion is that examples such as the ones he discusses in the article are useful in assisting planners to concentrate on the key issue of how to create a credible and useable tactical picture. He believes that consideration of such models can aid in the selection of sensor technologies and weapons systems and in coping with the inevitable failures. The final point is that, in imagining a future that is different from the present, such models and examples compel planners to explain how and why those differences will arise.

Article	'How Technology Failed in Iraq'
Author	David Talbot
Publication Details	<i>Technology Review</i> , November 2004, vol. 107, no. 9, pp. 36–45

SYNOPSIS

Using the largest counterattack of the Iraq War, on Objective Peach, Talbot explores what is new and what is timeless about battlefield intelligence and modern war. At Objective Peach, elements of the US Third Infantry Division prepared a hasty defence after capturing the most important bridge to Baghdad. They had received sketchy intelligence of a counterattack by up to a brigade of Iraqi troops. In reality, it was three full brigades of Republican Guard, and the US tactical networks were not working.

Battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel Marcone, US Army, at the forefront of the drive north, declared that the 'bridge was the most important piece of terrain in the theater' and that 'no-one can tell me what's defending it. Not how many troops, what units, what tanks, anything. There is zero information getting to me. Someone may have known above me, but the information didn't get to me on the ground'.

Talbot uses this single encounter battle to critique force transformation assumptions made about lighter, networked capabilities being faster, smarter or more able to endure in combat. He points out that, despite the hype about Blue Force Tracker and the like, network-enabled operations based on seamless interconnectivity remain aspirational for the Pentagon's digital battlefield. US force in Iraq, technologically advanced and heavy, still outran and outconsumed the electronic enablers like bandwidth and real-time intelligence that kept them potent weapons.

On the morning of 3 April 2003, Lieutenant Colonel Marcone stated: 'It is my belief that the Iraqi Republican Guard did nothing special to conceal their intentions of their movements. They attacked en masse using tactics that are more recognisable with the Soviet army of World War II'. As the Colonel says about his battlefield intelligence, 'we got nothing until they slammed into us'.

Article	'Joint Fires and Effects in the Heavy Brigade Combat Team'
Author	Major General David Valcourt, Chief of Field Artillery, US Army
Publication Details	<i>Armor</i> , January–February, 2005, pp. 14–17

SYNOPSIS

General Valcourt begins by quoting one of Napoleon's maxims of war (#47), which holds that 'infantry, cavalry and artillery cannot dispense with each other'. The article goes on to outline the role that the joint fires and effects system of the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) will play in the new modular brigades of the US Army. The author discusses how recent experience in Afghanistan and Iraq will influence the employment and composition of the new organic-fires battalions attached to a modular brigade-sized unit of action.

One important innovation that is directly attributable to recent operational experience is the need to deploy joint terminal attack controllers (JTAC) at the company level to meet the demand for terminal control of close air support (CAS). The US Air Force has too few JTAC-trained personnel to meet the requirement. The author says this shortfall will probably mean that the Army will need to certify soldiers as JTACs. In turn, this necessity will require extensive training and equipment changes in order for Army personnel to meet joint force standards for the employment of CAS.

By making such battalions organic to the BCT, the Army will provide the new modular units with a highly effective and cohesive joint fires capability. This capability will be a great asset to manoeuvre commanders when combined with the infantry and armour forces of the BCT. In the light of these developments, the author concludes that the former artillery corporal (Napoleon) was obviously right.

Article	'Nonlinear; Noncontiguous Operations and the Control of Indirect Fires and Close Air Support'
Author	Donald F. Wilkins
Publication Details	<i>Landpower Essay: An Institute of Land Warfare Publication</i> , no. 04-8W (December 2004)

SYNOPSIS

The author, a former United States Army Signal Corps officer and now principal engineer for Boeing, examines the challenges of controlling indirect fire (IF) and close air support (CAS) in nonlinear, noncontiguous operations. He suggests that, in

the 'savage wars of peace' prevalent at the beginning of the 21st century, the skills of directing timely and accurate IF and CAS are required at much lower levels than in the conventional operations of the immediate past. In essence, the traditional methods of requesting and directing combat support are too slow and inflexible for dispersed forces as they rely on diverse and scarce groups of highly trained forward observers and tactical air-control teams, each with specialised equipment. On the other hand, transformed, networked joint forces have the potential to shorten the sensor-to-shooter cycle considerably, but only if control is decentralised. The paper proposes a new approach to meet the demands of contemporary operations, and his suggestion is the Joint Observer Controller (JOC).

The JOC is to be a soldier trained to direct joint IF–CAS and equipped with an integrated system of commercial off-the-shelf hardware that will simplify control processes. The systems architecture is centred around a personal computer providing a personal digital assistant, databases, a global positioning system (GPS), joint tactical radio system, camera, radar and digital compass. This hardware is dependent on layered, interoperable software applications developed within a System of Systems Common Operating Environment. The integration of this hardware and software will provide the necessary checks and balances that will allow training time to be reduced. The integration process will also provide build-in fail-safe measures against fratricide and collateral damage.

At the heart of the system is a tactical internet (TI) that provides horizontal and vertical digital information that can be exchanged and distributed throughout the force. Physically it is a network of routers and radios that utilise network protocols to disseminate situational awareness data and command-and-control traffic. Communications will be based around the Joint Tactical Radio System, which will in essence link the individual soldier as a TI protocol node. In order to determine precisely the location of friendly forces and targets, the JOC will have access to differential GPS, Blue Force Tracking and hand-held radar for ranging, and this will be supported by voice and data links with imaging devices.

The advantages of networking will also be realised in training that offers the potential to exploit computer simulation in the training of the JOC. Such training will save costs and increase experience. The author concludes that the JOC concept could expand the capability to control IF–CAS by simplifying the control processes and integrating the expert systems, allowing commanders more flexibility in providing inorganic weapon support.

Article	‘Bad News: Should Media Manipulation be a Tool of War?’
Author	Tom Breen, Staff Journalist
Publication Details	<i>Armed Forces Journal</i> , February 2005, pp. 24–8

SYNOPSIS

The War on Terror has raised questions over the role of Military Public Affairs (PA). Is PA involved in the transmission of truthful information about the US military and its operations to the press, or has it now become the best means available to manage information operations (IO) in the ongoing war. After broaching this issue, the author mentions the cases of Jessica Lynch and former NFL footballer Pat Tillman as specific instances of manipulation of the facts by PA officials. IO uses both offensive and defensive measures in support of national security objectives, and the Lynch and Tillman cases can be seen as part of an IO effort to raise the spirits of the American people.

However, other IO tactics include PA officers ‘managing’ the distribution and content of news items given to media organisations. This idea of managing the media was perhaps the intention behind the controversial and short-lived Office of Strategic Influence, which critics of the Bush Administration believe was supposed to ‘manage’ information at the strategic national level. The article notes that the distinctions between PA, IO and psychological operations (PsyOps) in military doctrine seem to be increasingly blurred. The example of the announcement by a USMC PA spokesman that operations had begun against insurgents in Falluja is cited as another instance of ‘managing’ the news. Despite the Pentagon’s protestations to the contrary, the announcement about the assault on Falluja was made three weeks before operations commenced and was widely seen as the military using the media to ‘rattle the enemy’ psychologically.

The article concludes with an examination of the key ways in which US IO doctrine is evolving. These include such widely varying areas as electronic warfare capabilities, computer network operations, PsyOps, military deception and cyber security. The lack of clear definitions and the integrated employment of all these capabilities is threatening the credibility of PA officers as a source of trustworthy information. The author notes the commonly held perception that the US-led coalition in Iraq has lost the information war to the insurgents, but ends with the warning of a senior media correspondent that using PA officers as purveyors of false information to redress this problem would be a very ill-advised step.

Article	'Just War Criteria and the New Face of War: Human Shields, Manufactured Martyrs and Little Boys with Stones'
Author	Michael Skerker, University of Chicago
Publication Details	<i>Journal of Military Ethics</i> , vol. 3, no. 1, 2004, pp. 27–39

SYNOPSIS

Michael Skerker is a student at the University of Chicago's Divinity School, whose research deals with just-war criteria and the moral demands that it places on military training and intelligence systems. This article applies the criteria of just-war theory to the tactics of asymmetric warfare, in which a conventionally weaker force might shape the conditions of combat in order to frustrate the superior military capabilities of a morally scrupulous opponent. Skerker shows how tactics such as exploiting human shields, using urban areas as bases from which to launch attacks or hide military forces, provoking reprisals and creating humanitarian disasters would create a situation in which the militarily stronger force could not achieve its mission without violating the laws of war. The pressures on the stronger force to adhere meticulously to the laws of armed conflict are especially intense in the context of a constant media presence.

The thesis of the article is supported by case studies and examples from conflicts in the Balkans and the Middle East. Acknowledging that no amount of provocation releases a military force from its moral obligations to civilian noncombatants, the article makes some practical suggestions about how such tactics can be anticipated and thwarted. In a conclusion entitled 'When Fighting Well Appears Impossible', the author asks some very poignant political and moral questions about the validity of using armed force against an insurgency.

Article	'The Problem with Fourth Generation War'
Author	Antulio Echevarria, Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College
Publication Details	http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/newsletter/opeds/2005feb.pdf

SYNOPSIS

Echevarria's short article is a critique of Fourth Generation War Theory (4GW) and questions the validity of the theory itself, stating that it is based on a poor understanding of history and existing military theories. The basic premise of 4GW theory, which has been around since the 1980s, is that warfare in the modern era has

passed through four generations: the massed armies of the Napoleonic period; the firepower revolution of World War I; the combined arms manoeuvre warfare period started by the German *Blitzkrieg* of World War II and still largely employed by the US Army; and 4GW itself, an ‘evolved’ form of insurgency in which military, political, social and economic networks are turned against an opponent in order to achieve victory.

This neat construct is misleading. The theory’s sequencing implies a natural progression between generations, with each eventually displacing the other. Such displacement rarely takes place and the generational developments cited in the theory often coexist from one period to the next. Firepower, for example, has been a major feature of warfare since Napoleonic times. Insurgency too has been a method of waging war and was first recorded in ancient times.

The logic of 4GW is also flawed and actually undermines the theory. Each of the preceding generations of warfare is based on an evolutionary development towards a technologically superior form of warfare. Following this progression, 4GW should be based on a networked force that is agile and capable of decisive action through the use of superior technology and organisation. However, the super-insurgency of 4GW goes against this trend. Problems with the logic of the theory do not end there. As Echevarria observes, the theory of successive generations of warfare is based on a false comparison of means or techniques of warfare—massed manpower, firepower and manoeuvre—with insurgency, which is in fact a form or method of waging war. He also points out that military, political, social and economic factors have always been important aspect of warfare from the Napoleonic ‘nation in arms’ to the ‘total war’ of World War I and World War II.

Concluding his argument, Echevarria states the belief that there is no reason for the 4GW theorists to reinvent the wheel regarding insurgency. Good work has already been done on the convergence of globalisation and information technology and how this trend has led to the development of insurgent groups in the current era. There is no need for another label, supported by flawed logic, to obscure rather than illuminate something that is already well understood by military theorists.