

Military Review

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(Photo by Sgt. Margaret Taylor, 129th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Pfc. Arturo Brooks, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, pulls security during a presence patrol 22 August 2013 around Forward Operating Base Fenty, Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan.

International Security Assistance Force Joint Command 2014

The Year of Change

Lt. Gen. Joseph Anderson, U.S. Army, and

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Transitions typically are not discrete events. Rather, they consist of overlapping groups of actions that, over time, interact to create a potent mix of challenges. Transitions can take on numerous forms—sometimes they are relatively simple.

For example, during World Wars I and II, units rotated regularly, with fresh troops executing reliefs-in-place with their beleaguered front-line counterparts. At other times, the changes can be more nuanced and complex. For instance, after the initial invasion of Iraq in

2003, many Army units struggled to make the mental and physical shifts from major combat operations to counterinsurgency.

This article discusses how the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Joint Command managed transitions at the operational level during the shift from Operation Enduring Freedom to the NATO-led Resolute Support mission in 2014. The experience offers seven lessons learned:

- ◆ Plan early and often.
- ◆ Build flexibility into plans.
- ◆ Be as transparent as possible.
- ◆ Integrate transitions across lines of operation, and synchronize them with operations in support of campaign objectives.
- ◆ Ensure key leaders play an active role managing both imposed and conditions-based transitions.
- ◆ Adjust staff processes to account for increased requirements during the transition process.
- ◆ Design organizations and processes with consideration for their short- and long-term consequences.

Although the focus of this discussion is on counterinsurgency, these lessons can be applied to future contingencies across the range of military operations.

Not all transitions are created equal, but transitions are a part of all military operations. The experiences of the ISAF Joint Command, together with similar experiences during drawdowns in Iraq and elsewhere, beg the question: What should military forces do, if anything, to prepare for the inevitable transitions that will occur during a campaign? Moreover, how should units plan for, manage, and execute the myriad transitions they will encounter?

To answer these questions, the U.S. Army needs to develop better doctrine and training on conducting and managing transitions. It needs to explore transitions through rigorous academic study so that forces can ensure transitions support tactical as well as operational and strategic objectives. The experiences of the ISAF Joint Command provide a starting point. These experiences and lessons can inform future leaders' efforts to oversee their own transitions so they can better anticipate challenges and capitalize on the opportunities.

Reducing Force Posture

In the final year of Operation Enduring Freedom, the ISAF Joint Command adjusted its force posture to set

the conditions for the transition to Resolute Support by closing or transferring 75 bases, retrograding over 77,000 pieces of rolling and non-rolling stock, and redeploying over 90,000 personnel—including military, civilian, and contractors—from 48 troop-contributing nations.

Base closures and transfers. The ISAF Joint Command reviewed in detail the effects base closures and transfers would have on its operational reach and on the Afghan National Security Forces' (ANSF's) support structure. They balanced the ANSF's eagerness to assume control of the ISAF footprint with the concern that too many ANSF bases would render them a static force. The Command developed detailed criteria to determine which strategic bases would remain, which would be closed or transferred, and in what sequence.

In cases where property would transfer, the ISAF Joint Command worked closely with commanders on the ground and the Afghan-led Joint Base Closure Commission to develop plans and procedures for base transfers, including identifying real property and infrastructure that would go to the Afghans.

Retrograde and redeployment. In a process similar to base closure efforts, the ISAF Joint Command balanced retrograde and redeployment tasks with current operations to set conditions for Resolute Support. The task was monumental given the sheer amount of equipment and personnel involved.

Early in the year, commanders of the NATO regional commands maintained discretion to determine operational equipment requirements. Regional commanders, loathe to lose flexibility, were reluctant to release resources that they might need later in the year. Unfortunately, the closer the 31 December 2014 deadline came, the less flexibility the ISAF Joint Command had to move equipment and close and transfer bases, mostly due to throughput limitations and dwindling assets in theater. The ISAF Joint Command solved this problem by elevating and centralizing decision-making authority for retrograde and redeployment efforts and for base closures and transfers to the three-star level, effectively removing other commanders from the decision cycle for certain assets.

Reduced coalition presence. The diminished force posture decreased the ISAF Joint Command's operational reach and restricted coalition operations to areas within medical evacuation range. Likewise, the smaller number of coalition forces across the operational area

decreased situational awareness—fewer bases and personnel meant fewer sensors to monitor operations and gauge atmospherics on the ground. The ISAF Joint Command continued to support the ANSF with enablers and other assets but at ever decreasing levels. With the reduction in platforms, the Command maintained situational awareness by inserting coalition forces into operations coordination centers—the Afghan version of command fusion cells—at the provincial and regional levels.

Complementing this effort, the ISAF Joint Command developed a strategic communications plan to counter the insurgents' abandonment narrative, especially when it came to base closures and transfers, and to ensure that the ANSF understood the nature and implications of the changes. Honesty and transparency were critical. Ultimately, force posture reductions, with the concomitant reduction in enabler support, prompted the ANSF to adapt and substitute their own capabilities for coalition assets.

Changing Missions

While reducing its force posture, the ISAF Joint Command executed a change in mission. Beginning in the summer of 2014, the Command transitioned from providing unit-level training, advising, and assisting at the brigade- and battalion-levels to providing functionally based security force assistance (SFA) from corps-level platforms to Afghan National Army corps, type-A provincial chiefs of police, and regional operations coordination centers.¹ Functionally based SFA, distinct from tactical-level training, advising, and assisting, is focused on providing institutional advisory support with an emphasis on improving organizations, systems, and processes.

Advisor focus. During Operation Enduring Freedom, small-unit mentors, previously focused on their counterparts' immediate challenges, were limited in their ability to provide long-term sustainment and development advice. During Resolute Support, corps-level advisors began focusing instead on the development of ANSF systems and institutions. These specialized advisors possessed the skills to advise the ANSF on operational and strategic matters, and were capable of applying a systems approach to affect institutional change. In this new construct, advisors integrated their efforts vertically and horizontally

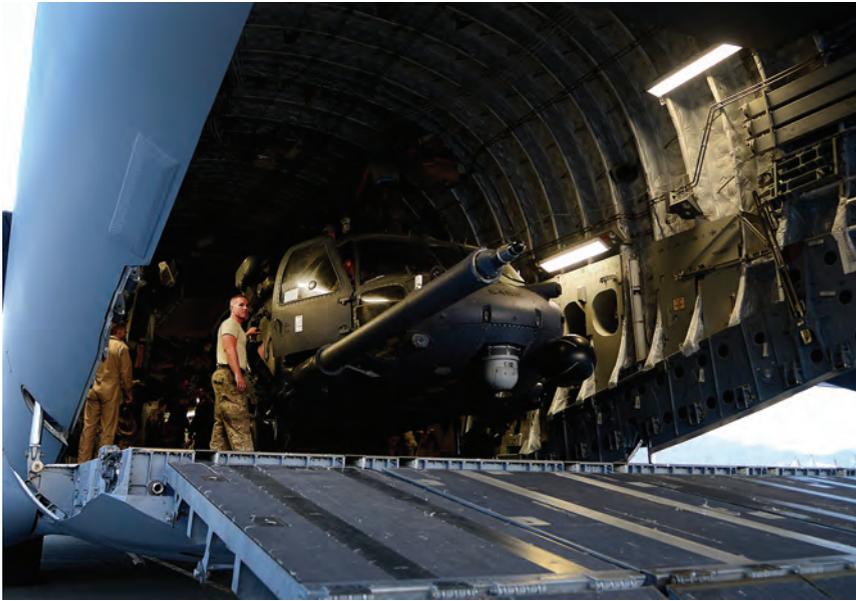
by linking ministerial-level systems with corps-level practices.

Command organization. This change in mission informed the composition and structure of train, advise, and assist commands (TAACs) and the new headquarters of NATO's Resolute Support mission. TAACs represented a distinct type of organization, not simply a scaled-down regional command. TAACs would have no operational warfighting responsibility, and commanders configured them based on local conditions, optimizing their staffs to deliver functionally based SFA. At the ISAF (and later at Resolute Support) headquarters, Napoleonic staff structures such as personnel, intelligence, and operations staff became dual hatted, charged with traditional staff duties and the integration of functionally based SFA from the national to regional levels. Colloquially referred to as "mainstreaming," this practice promoted unity of effort for the essential SFA functions.

Security force assistance priorities. The ISAF Joint Command created systems and processes to target and prioritize functionally based SFA. For example, they established the SFA Working Group and the SFA Synchronization Board to identify systemic development issues and target resources to resolve them. This process required a disciplined approach. Issues brought forth from the SFA Working Group to the SFA Synchronization Board were restricted to those that subordinate commanders could not resolve. Regional command and TAAC input ensured that ANSF priorities were captured. The ISAF Joint Command used the SFA Synchronization Board to inform ISAF's functionally based SFA approach. Overall, the SFA Working Group and SFA Synchronization Board increased awareness of ANSF development shortfalls and SFA implementation challenges across the ISAF Joint Command staff (integrating the staff horizontally) and created feedback loops for issues from the national to the regional levels (integrating functionally based SFA efforts vertically).

Realigning Headquarters

Recognizing that functionally based SFA required an entirely different type of headquarters, commands were realigned to set conditions for the new Resolute Support mission. These changes, requiring significant manning modifications, entailed extensive coordination with ISAF, NATO's Allied Joint Forces Command-Brunssum, United States Central Command, and the Joint Staff.



(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Evelyn Chavez)

A U.S. airman with the 455th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron secures an HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter inside a C-17 Globemaster III aircraft 9 June 2014 at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

tranches, over six months, culminating in December 2014. To manage the staff transition, the ISAF Joint Command and ISAF chaired weekly joint transition boards to identify and validate staff readiness. This joint effort proved an effective tool to ensure every combined-joint staff group from intelligence (CJ-2) to strategic targeting and information operations (CJ-39) was prepared and that ISAF headquarters was ready to receive personnel and

Preparation for headquarters reorganization.

The ISAF Joint Command helped set the stage for the transition by moving a significant portion of its combined-joint future plans staff (CJ-55) to ISAF early in the summer to plan the transfer of sections and functions to the ISAF (and later to Resolute Support) headquarters. Shortly thereafter, they integrated the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan—formerly a subordinate unit of the Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan—into the ISAF Joint Command as a subordinate command and then a staff directorate. They also abolished the ANSF development cell, spreading its functions across the staff, and moved the ANSF Logistics Directorate and Combined-Joint Psychological Operations Task Force to the ISAF headquarters.

United States Forces-Afghanistan transferred engineer and intelligence staff to the ISAF Joint Command to increase capacity, gain efficiencies, and eliminate capability redundancies. NATO Air Command-Afghanistan, ISAF Joint Command's Afghan Air Force training element, reduced staff and consolidated advisory and training efforts from regional bases to Kabul. Finally, staff sections, including portions of the combined-joint future operations staff (CJ-35), steadily transitioned to ISAF to create these capabilities at the strategic level. All these transitions set the stage for the ISAF Joint Command's pending merger with ISAF and for ISAF's subsequent transition to the Resolute Support headquarters.

Joint transition. The two organizations merged via eight packages of personnel and staff functions, called

functions. The transitions of the combined-joint operations center (CJOC) and current operations (CJ-33) staff were particularly challenging since no commensurate CJOC facility or CJ-33 function existed within ISAF. The ISAF Joint Command and ISAF collaborated closely on this transfer, even developing rigorous training for future CJOC staff to ensure ISAF was prepared for its operational responsibilities.

Regional command reorganization. The reorganization of regional commands into TAACs was executed in two tranches. Tranche 1, including NATO Regional Commands Capital, West, and North, transitioned to TAACs throughout July 2014. Tranche 2, consisting of NATO Regional Commands South and East, made the shift three months later. Compared to Regional Commands South and East, tranche 1 transitions took place in less complex, less violent regions, which enabled the ISAF Joint Command and the TAACs to work through authorities, systems, processes, and friction points with fewer distractions before the more challenging tranche 2 transitions. NATO Regional Commands South and East benefited from their counterparts' experiences. By the time of the tranche 2 transitions, they were able to implement lessons learned, while the ISAF Joint Command was able to ensure corps-level systems and processes were in place to support the changes.

During the transition to TAACs, many of the functions formerly performed by NATO regional commands, such as patient evacuation and intelligence coordination, were elevated to the ISAF Joint Command, effectively

becoming operational-level responsibilities rather than tactical ones. As with the Resolute Support headquarters, a great deal of coordination with ISAF, NATO, and others went into sourcing the unique manning requirements for these new platforms. Transfers of authority at the levels of regional command, brigade, and battalion, as well as troop-contributing nation *ends of operation* and *ends of mission*, exacerbated the complexity of the dynamic security environment.

The transition to TAACs involved major changes for the regional commands and the ANSF. This transition fundamentally changed the nature of advisory support. For example, force-manning limitations prevented coalition forces from maintaining a persistent presence in Helmand and the region south of Kabul. During Resolute Support, they would only provide periodic advising to ANSF in these regions.

Before the end of these advisory missions, the ISAF Joint Command, in conjunction with the Afghan National Army General Staff, executed combined staff assistance visits to the Afghan National Army's 215th and 203rd Corps (based in Helmand and the area south of Kabul, respectively) to assess their capabilities and advise them on ways to improve their institutional systems and processes. The ISAF Joint Command

also established Advise and Assist Cells Southwest and Southeast within ISAF headquarters to maintain ministerial support from Kabul after the lift-off of advisory support from these corps. Later, the ISAF Joint Command (and subsequently ISAF) executed combined-staff assistance visits to the remaining Afghan corps.

Supporting Afghan Transitions

The year 2014 was marked by political and security transitions, with the Afghans undergoing their own changes parallel to the ISAF Joint Command. There were two presidential elections—general elections in April (which included Provincial Council elections) and a run-off in June. This latter election took place between Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah after no candidate received more than the required 50 percent of the vote in the first round. Ashraf Ghani, declared the winner after a run-off and a drawn-out audit, was sworn into office as president of Afghanistan on 29 September 2014.

Afghan elections. The ISAF Joint Command supported the ANSF's efforts to secure the elections with advisory assistance during planning; air weapons teams and airlift support for the movement of ballot material; and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance,



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Frances Johnson)

Cpl. Andrew Harris, a UH-1Y Huey crew chief with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369, performs a weapons check before an aerial assault support mission for ground convoys 3 May 2014 in Helmand Province, Afghanistan.

close air support, and other enablers on election days. When evidence of corruption threatened to derail the whole process, the ISAF Joint Command supported the United Nations-led audit by transporting nearly 23,000 ballot boxes back to Kabul and by supporting security at the strategically important Independent Election Commission warehouses, site of the audit.

New Afghan government. Once the elections were complete, the ISAF Joint Command supported ANSF efforts to secure the seating of the new government. Along with the new president came rumors of Afghan leadership changes. Rampant speculation created some turbulence for coalition forces; it was not clear whether existing ANSF leadership would remain in their current positions or be replaced. The same held true for key Afghan ministerial-level leaders. Maintaining neutrality, coalition forces worked hard to preserve relationships with the Afghans during this period of great uncertainty.

Shift to Afghan military forces. The ISAF Joint Command significantly decreased its support to the ANSF once the run-off and summer-2014 fighting season were complete. They downsized and consolidated advisory efforts at national command and control nodes. They reduced enablers—such as air weapons teams; medical evacuation; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; and close air support—that previously were available to the ANSF. The ANSF realized that they soon would transition from leading security operations to assuming full security responsibility. They responded by substituting their own capabilities for functions formerly performed by the coalition. For example, they increasingly substituted D-30 artillery fire (122mm howitzers) for coalition close air support and their own route clearance assets for ISAF route clearance patrols.

The ISAF Joint Command steadily shifted ANSF training requirements to contractors and to the Afghans themselves in preparation for Resolute Support and the ANSF's assumption of full security responsibility. At the national level, NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan transitioned counter-improvised explosive device, combat service support, literacy, and other contractor-led train-the-trainer programs to the ANSF. Regional commands (later TAACs) implemented improvised explosive device awareness, tactical air controllers, and call-for-fire train-the-trainer programs, placing Afghans in charge of their own training.

The ISAF Joint Command socialized all these changes with the ANSF early enough to manage expectations and prevent surprises. Applying transparency and candor early paid off. The ANSF had enough time to start developing their own solutions before coalition assistance ended. The transition occurred early enough—between August and October—to enable the ISAF Joint Command to respond to contingencies, which reduced the probability of the ANSF's operational or strategic failure. The Command's decrease in support shifted responsibility for the war to the ANSF and helped both sides adjust to the changing nature of the partnership.

Shifting Mind-Sets

The obvious transitions involved tangible factors, such as base reductions and troop redeployments. Less obvious were the transitions in attitude that took place among the coalition and ANSF. For example, the change to functionally based SFA required a distinct mental shift for both sides.

Coalition attitude changes. During Resolute Support, rather than enabling ANSF combat operations, coalition forces began to provide institutional-level advisory support through functionally based SFA. Despite the coalition forces' "can-do" attitude, they had to come to terms with their new, more limited role. The same held true for the decrease in enablers. Coalition forces, accustomed to supporting their ANSF counterparts, had to adjust to the fact that they no longer had a combat role now that the ANSF had full security responsibility for their country.

Afghan attitude changes. Conversely, Afghans had to realize that coalition enablers and other support were a thing of the past. For over 12 years, coalition forces provided all kinds of assistance during combat operations. The early transition of regional commands to TAACs—which coincided with a precipitous reduction in enabler support—confirmed to the ANSF that coalition assistance would not be as forthcoming as it once was. The removal of certain capabilities helped them make the mental transition to the fact that during Resolute Support, enablers would only be available under extreme circumstances.

New confidence. The ANSF's performance during the elections and summer fighting season, besides proving that they were capable of securing the country, bolstered their confidence and helped them make

the mental transition toward full security responsibility. In fact, this transition may have been the most important. Predicated on successful security operations, the Afghans' newfound confidence will prove critical to their success and development into 2015 and beyond.

Lessons Learned

Transitions and the way they are managed profoundly affect the long-term security environment in a given country. How then can transitions be managed to positively shape the future operational and strategic environments so the United States and its allies can achieve their objectives and secure their long-term interests?

Lesson one: planning. The first lesson is to plan early and often. Commanders and staffs should anticipate transitions likely to occur and identify how they interact to influence the operational and strategic environments.

Besides identifying early the majority of the transitions set to occur across the country, the ISAF Joint Command recognized that a fundamental tension existed between reductions in force posture and its ongoing ability to support the ANSF. The ISAF Joint Command balanced each requirement, making sure the ANSF received sufficient support during the elections and the 2014 fighting season while simultaneously retrograding non-mission-essential equipment to achieve required force posture levels by the end of 2014.

In addition, the Command identified whether tasks funded under Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act would be continued, amended, or discontinued during Resolute Support. They also identified who—contractors, the Department of State, the government of Afghanistan, or someone else—would assume responsibility for these requirements.²

Lesson two: flexibility. Second, commanders should build flexibility into their plans because delays and



unanticipated consequences will most certainly occur. The way to prepare for the unexpected is to make flexible plans. For example, the ISAF Joint Command planned and pushed hard to complete the transfer and closure of bases by 15 November to allow time for any unforeseen requirements before the end of their mandate. They also maintained the capability to surge engineer assets—both over-the-horizon engineers and United States Central Command material recovery elements—to assist with retrograde and redeployment. Working with United States Central Command, they maintained the capability to support intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets during the elections, fighting season, and high-risk retrograde and redeployment activities.

Lesson three: transparency. Third, it is important to be as transparent as possible, especially with host-nation forces, to manage expectations and ensure common



(Photo by Pfc. Dixie Rae Liwanag, 55th Combat Camera)

Brig. Gen. David Haight exchanges greetings with Afghan National Army Maj. Gen. Mohammad Yaftali, the commander of the 203rd Corps, at the Kabul Military Training Center in Kabul, Afghanistan, 13 April 2014. The Kabul Military Training Center is the largest Afghan National Army training facility.

understanding. The ISAF Joint Command recognized that certain transitions would alter its relationship with the ANSF and that communication along the way could prevent misunderstandings.

Before the elections, it was important to maintain sufficient support so that the ANSF could sustain their operational momentum against the enemy; however, afterward the ISAF Joint Command precipitously reduced enablers to retrograde excess equipment and set conditions for Resolute Support. The Command clearly explained to the Afghans the nature of the changes well in advance to help them adjust their expectations. Candid communication helped both sides acclimate to the shifting nature

of the relationship, which in turn helped both make the transition in mindset.

Lesson four: integration.

Fourth, transitions, as with strategic communications, should be integrated across lines of operation. Commanders should regularly reassess and reprioritize each transition to synchronize it with operations in support of campaign objectives. The ISAF Joint Command tracked and managed many simultaneous transitions. They emphasized certain ones at different times by prioritizing the realignment of headquarters early in the year and the shift from unit-level TAA activities to functionally based SFA, along with base closures and force posture reductions later. The key is recognizing that transitions will occur concurrently across lines of operation, and commanders and staffs must be aware of the interactions of various transitions so they can better manage the whole.

Lesson five: key leader role.

Fifth, some transitions required a centralized, top-down management process, especially for assets on which commanders depended. Key leaders were the locus for action. Only they could cut through inertia-

laden bureaucratic processes—such as the Foreign Excess Personal Property and Foreign Excess Real Property programs—to effect change. These programs, which entail numerous steps to transfer property to foreign governments, were streamlined to expedite the responsible transfer of excess material to the Afghans. Between June and November 2014, the United States transferred equipment valued at over \$850 million through the Foreign Excess Personal Property program alone, saving American taxpayers millions of dollars in transportation costs. Commanders' involvement simplified and expedited an extraordinarily complex process.

Some requirements will be imposed while others will be conditions-based. The 1 January 2015

beginning of Resolute Support was a firm date that drove the entire transition process. Conversely, the ISAF Joint Command elected to transition regional commands to TAACs only when appropriate systems, structures, and force packages were in place. Regardless, leaders played a prominent role in guiding and managing all the transitions, whether imposed or conditions-based.

Lesson six: battle rhythm. Sixth, transitions affected the ISAF Joint Command's battle rhythm and planning. To maintain situational awareness, the command staff and subordinate headquarters briefed every aspect of the many transitions at battle update briefings each week. Based on campaign priorities, the ISAF Joint Command adjusted the type and frequency of reporting requirements. These periodic updates enabled both the staff and subordinates to understand the impact of transitions across the operational area.

Transitions affected the ISAF Joint Command's planning capabilities, particularly when their future plans staff (CJ-55), was integrated into ISAF. At this point, the CJ-55 became the ISAF future operations staff (CJ-35), leaving the ISAF Joint Command's own CJ-35 responsible for increased future operations and future plans responsibilities. After the departure of the ISAF Joint Command's CJ-55, its CJ-35 was responsible for—among other things—developing transition plans for the entire theater and plans for the August retrograde of audit material, all while simultaneously redeploying and transferring personnel to other headquarters. Combined, these factors placed quite a burden on the overstretched CJ-35 staff. Other staff sections shared similar experiences.

Lesson seven: trajectory. Seventh, transition plans—like any decision—will naturally take on a certain “path dependency.” In other words, it is difficult to change a transition's trajectory once it starts down a certain path. The long-term direction of new organizations and processes tends to be set at the beginning. Commanders must be cognizant of the short- and long-term effects of their plans and ensure they manage transitions in a way that supports the achievement of both operational and strategic objectives.

For example, the transition to Resolute Support headquarters and TAACs involved significant restructuring to optimize the headquarters to deliver functionally based SEA. Once the structures were agreed

upon, they were staffed and equipped accordingly. Lack of foresight or poor design could have created difficulties down the road and potentially threatened the Resolute Support mission. It is important that leaders consider the ramifications of transitions early on, especially how the design of organizations and processes will play out over time, when charting their way ahead.

The Way Ahead

The Army should work to prepare units for the transitions they will undoubtedly encounter during the closing months of military operations. The force can improve its management of transitions through doctrine, training, and research.

Doctrine. The process begins with doctrine. Unfortunately, current Army doctrine does not sufficiently address transitions and how to manage them. While noting that commanders should anticipate, plan for, and arrange tasks to facilitate transitions, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, does not mention that multiple transitions often occur simultaneously.³ ADP 3-07, *Stability*, does not provide details on how to manage transitions or the major shifts in a campaign that often occur over an extended period of time.⁴ ADP 5-0, *The Operations Process*, hardly touches on the issue and only mentions transitions briefly in the context of phasing and planning.⁵ Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*, does point out that transitions must be integrated into lines of effort by linking operational tasks to campaign objectives, and it is the only manual of those surveyed that notes transitions are a sequence of actions rather than a point in time.⁶ That said, it still leaves much to be desired to inform future transition planning and management. Similar deficits as those just mentioned hold true for joint doctrine.

To remedy this, the Army should develop an Army doctrine publication or field manual focused on transitions, detailing both basic and enduring challenges, to guide efforts during subsequent military operations. The manual should be general enough to apply to a broad array of scenarios but specific enough to be useful. The *Senior Leader's Guide to Transition Planning*, published by the Center for Army Lessons Learned, provides a good foundation upon which to build.⁷

Training. The Army should integrate the conduct of transitions into Army Centers of Excellence training modules. In particular, transition-focused training modules with an emphasis on planning and management should be integrated into existing professional military education at the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College. Additionally, transition-focused scenarios should be adopted for use at the combat training centers so that units conducting mission readiness and other exercises can work through the challenges.

Research. The Army should encourage a deeper exploration of the effect transitions have on conflict termination and the achievement of strategic objectives through seminars and research endeavors sponsored by the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College. The only way to truly understand a topic is to systematically study and prepare for it. Recent experience in Iraq demonstrates that the way conflicts are terminated has profound effects on long-term strategic objectives. More work is needed to understand the way transitions

affect peace negotiations and conflict termination. Along those same lines, more work is needed to determine how to manage and execute transitions to link tactical actions with strategic objectives.

Conclusion

Transitions are an inevitable part of operations. At the tactical level, the U.S. Army does a good job planning for them; military units clearly identify tactical phases and the conditions under which they will transition to the next stage of an operation. Army forces are less adept at managing transitions at the operational and strategic levels. Just as Army leaders identify and plan for transitions tactically, so too must commanders and their staffs plan for them at the operational and strategic levels. The ISAF Joint Command's experience in Afghanistan provides a good model to extract lessons learned. To truly prepare for and take advantage of transitions, commanders must identify transitions early, while maintaining flexibility and adaptability in the midst of ever-changing circumstances. ■

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Notes

1. Type-A provincial chiefs of police are in the largest or most dominant province in a zone or region and have several type-B and type-C provincial chiefs of police reporting directly to them.

2. Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act (the annual U.S. law that specifies the defense budget) provides the Secretary of Defense with authority to train and equip foreign military forces for counterterrorism and stability operations.

3. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Unified Land Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office [GPO], 2011).

4. ADP 3-07, *Stability* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2012).

5. ADP 5-0, *The Operations Process* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2012).

6. Field Manual 3-24, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies* (Washington, DC: U.S. GPO, 2014).

7. Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL), *Senior Leader's Guide to Transition Planning*, CALL Handbook no. 13-14, version 3.0 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2013), <https://call2.army.mil/toc.aspx?document=7090&filename=/docs/doc7090/13-14.pdf> (accessed 20 November 2014, available only with a common access card or Army Knowledge Online login).