



INCREASING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MILITARY CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT BASED ON INTERACTIVE METHODS

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ABSTRACT

The article presents some key ideas on subject of military concepts. Generally, concepts articulate a high-order vision of how the future Armed Force will operate in changing operational environment and describe potential approach through which the Armed Force will defend and secure the nation's interests against a wide range of security challenges. Their purpose is to guide force development and future capability package development to counter emerging threats in concert with other allies, partners and other governmental and nongovernmental organizations

KEY WORDS: *military concept, development of military concepts, concept organisations, hierarchical concept.*

INTRODUCTION

A military concept is the description of a method or scheme for employing specified military capabilities in the achievement of a stated objective or aim. This description may range from broad to narrow. It may range from describing the employment of military forces in the broadest terms and at the highest levels to specifying the employment of a particular technology system or the application of a particular training system. Military concepts can be viewed in terms of ends, ways and means, of which the concept corresponds generally to the ways. The means are the military capabilities to be employed in the given situation. They may range from the full arsenal of military forces available at the operational or strategic levels to a particular capability such as a weapon system, vehicle, training system or specific unit at a lower level. The end is the stated objective, ranging from a broad strategic aim to the accomplishment of a particular task. The ways are the method or scheme (that is, the "concept") by which the means are applied to accomplish the ends. The essence of a concept is this description of method. A description of a capability by itself does not constitute a concept; capabilities can be created but not used as envisioned, while identical capabilities employed differently would constitute different concepts.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Before proceeding forward, a critical assumption to the building of a viable future military concept must be defined: there must be a limit to the

amount of violence countries will resort to in order to achieve political ends. More specifically, is that mutual nuclear deterrence will continue. Without this critical supposition, any conventionally based military strategy will fail in application against a peer competitor with a significant nuclear arsenal and will only result in total destruction to both sides. Warfare in this realm quickly escalates to what Clausewitz referred to as "total war," a theoretical concept describing war with no limit to the destruction that will be attained.²¹ In contrast, a viable operational concept must be grounded in "real war," war bound by constraints, rules, and limitations, with only the limited use of nuclear weapons considered as a last resort and only after firmly weighing the consequences against the potential gains. Nuclear warfare is the highest end of the warfare spectrum which effectively limits options for an adversary to capitulate and turns warfare from the intent to impose will or coerce compliance, into only a binary system of total destruction or non-destruction. For the future, a viable operational concept should provide a combatant commander with a variety of tools that span all domains and operate across the entire spectrum of conflict from which the correct tool or tools can be selected and applied to the given situation. Multiple tools provide flexibility and allow combatant commanders to apply the tenants of war appropriately to the situation to achieve the strategic objective and tailored to the given situation, while the overarching military strategy drives the peacetime training, equipment procurement, and conceptual



knowledge to comprehend the type of warfare and successfully operate in that environment. In its current form, Air-Sea battle presents only a limited set of operational tools specifically geared towards solving the mid- to high-intensity A2/ AD problem set and neglects the lower end of the conflict spectrum like those experienced in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Likewise, the description of a desired objective does not constitute a concept; any number of different approaches or methods, employing various capabilities, could conceivably accomplish that objective. The end is necessary to provide context, and the means are needed to describe what resources will be applied, but the essence of the concept is the way in which those capabilities are to be employed. In this sense, military concepts are primarily descriptions of how things are done.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Historical, current and future military concepts. Military concepts may describe past, present or future military actions or capabilities.

A historical concept describes its subject as it applied in some past context. Often the concept will not have been articulated explicitly at the time, but must be deduced from the historical record. Examples are the concept of blitzkrieg, the Napoleonic system of logistics, and the techniques and procedures of ship-to-shore movement practiced in the Second World War. The first two were not explicitly codified at the time, but have been deduced since, while the third was codified before the war, although continuously modified during the war. Historical concepts are both a product and a tool of historical analysis.

A current concept describes its subject as it is intended to apply today, with today's organizations, methods and technologies. A current concept may be explicitly codified in existing doctrinal, tactical, technical or procedural references, or it may be emergent (i.e., arising pragmatically and implicitly from current operating, technological and institutional conditions and identified only historically)—or, more likely, it may combine both explicit and emergent elements. Current concepts should provide the basis for operations planning and existing military doctrine, organization, materiel acquisition, training, education, tactics, techniques and procedures.

A future concept articulates how it is envisioned its subject will apply in some future context. Initially a future concept is untested and should be the subject of rigorous experimentation and debate. This forces it to evolve and eventually validates or invalidates it. In this way a future concept evolves from an untested hypothesis to a more assertive conclusion. Only after the concepts have been experimentally examined to the point that it has been validated with reasonable confidence does

it provide the basis for force planning, that “planning associated with the creation and maintenance of military capabilities.” (Joint Pub 1-02) Only at that point is a future concept used to guide the requirements process. Many concepts cannot be fully tested in peacetime. Since by definition future concepts cannot be deduced from past practice or observed in current practice, they must be stated explicitly in order to be understood, debated and tested and to influence the development process. This paper is most interested in future military concepts. Unless otherwise specified, the concepts discussed hereafter are future concepts.

Reasons for a New Operating Concept

There are two possible reasons to advance a new operating concept:

New military problem. An operating concept may be developed to propose a solution to an anticipated or newly identified military problem for which there is currently no adequate military solution. This new problem is brought about by some new combination of political, social, economic, technological, doctrinal or other factors. The new problem may be brought about by new objectives in an existing situation. For example, a situation itself may be unchanged, but political expectations may have increased, necessitating a new operating concept.

New solution to an existing military problem. An operating concept may be developed to propose a better solution than currently exists to an existing military problem. This better solution may be made possible by some technological, organizational, tactical, societal or other developments that did not exist previously, or it may be necessitated by the failure of an existing operating concept.

Elements of Future Operating Concepts

Purpose of the concept. Every future operating concept should begin with a statement of purpose which lays out the intended uses of the concept. Often a concept will have more than one purpose. The purpose or purposes of a concept at any given time will likely depend on the concept's stage of development. Early in the development of a concept, the purpose may be to generate thinking about how to cope with new operating challenges or how to exploit potential opportunities provided by technology or other developments. Later on, the purpose may be to provide the basis for military experiments and exercises. The purpose may be to explore approaches to conducting operations in certain circumstances in order to affect thinking about potential concepts of operations. At later stages, after the concept has been validated, the purpose may be to provide guidance to the combat development process or context for the development and evaluation of lower-order concepts.

Time horizon, assumptions and risks. A future operating concept should explicitly specify the future time period within which it is meant to apply. After a



concept has started to gain validation, in order to assist the combat development process, the concept may identify milestones when elements or implications of the concept are meant to take effect. To the extent possible, a concept should explicitly identify any critical assumptions upon which the concept is dependent. These establish the limits of the concept. The less restrictive the assumptions, the wider the applicability the concept will have. Additionally to the extent possible, a concept should specify any identified risks so that these may be explored and addressed during continued concept development.

Description of the military problem. In most basic terms, a future operating concept supposes a military problem and then proposes solutions to it. A future operating concept must therefore include a description of the military problem the concept is meant to solve. This provides the context within which the concept applies. Equally important, it establishes the conditions under which the concept does not apply. The problem description should include the broader context within which the problem exists. In the case of a strategic concept this would be the wider political situation. In the case of an operational concept, it would be the envisioned political-strategic situation. In the case of a tactical concept, it would be the operational situation. The problem description must include a statement of the type of mission to be accomplished. The mission type may be as broad as defeating enemy military forces in conventional combat, or it may be more narrowly defined. To the extent that geography or physical environment are factors in the concept, it should describe them. A central element of the problem description should be a description of the security environment envisioned to apply in the timeframe of the concept. This environment includes a description of the character and form of the envisioned threat, including organization, tactics, and weaponry and other key types of equipment and technology. It also includes any governmental, economic, societal or other factors that may impact on the conduct of military action. A concept may explicitly take its context from a higher-order operating concept, in which case it need not restate that context in full, but need only amplify where necessary.

There are four basic levels of military concepts, which form a hierarchy.

From top to bottom, these are:

- Institutional concepts, which describe military institutions;
- operating concepts, which describe how military forces operate;
- Functional concepts, which describe the performance of individual military functions or sub-functions; and
- enabling concepts, which describe the capabilities required in

order to perform military functions or sub-functions.

Military concepts are hierarchical, with their place in the hierarchy depending on the level of generality of the concept. In this way, military concepts have subordinate, superordinate and adjacent relationships to one another. In general, a concept should cover the widest range of situations that can be treated effectively with one set of language and principles. Subordinate concepts are created where more specific guidance is required than can be provided by the higher concept.

Concepts dealing in relatively more general terms with a broader subject area can be described as high-order. Operating concepts are of a higher order than functional concepts, which are of a higher order than enabling concepts. Higher-order concepts provide context for and guide the development of subordinate, lower-order concepts.

Concepts dealing in relatively more specific terms with a narrower subject area can be described as low-order. Such a concept describes in greater detail a subset of the subject area described in more general terms by a higher-order concept. Lower-order concepts must be compatible with higher-order concepts to which they are subordinate. While higher-order concepts generally guide the development of lower-order concepts, it should be recognized that influence may also work in the other direction. A breakthrough lower-order concept may make it possible or even necessary to revisit higher-order principles.

Operating concepts provide the authoritative basis and guidance for functional concepts, which likewise provide the authoritative basis and guidance for enabling concepts. Likewise, within each type of military concept, higher-order concepts guide lower order concepts, and lower-order concepts must be compatible with higher-order concepts.

The hierarchical distinction between the different levels of concepts may become blurred in particular cases. For example, the abstract difference between a low-order operating concept and a high-order functional concept may not be clear—and frankly is probably not very important. A particular concept may bridge the gap between levels. As a practical matter, being able to fix the location of a particular concept on an abstract hierarchy is not nearly as important as being able to fix its proper relationships to other existing concepts.

Validation. A successful concept must undergo a validation process by which it is tested and eventually accepted or rejected by the institution. Any important military concept under consideration should be the subject of an open and honest debate within the institution.

CONCLUSION

The validation process provides a sort of crucible through which the concept must pass—strengthening the concept in the process if it survives.



In this way validation and development are closely linked. Like development, validation often tends to be disorderly. It occurs both formally and informally. Both are necessary in validating a concept. A concept may have been officially approved, but is not truly validated until it has been accepted by the stakeholders of the institution. Formal validation takes place through workshops, war games, experiments or other activities held by proper authority for the express purpose of evaluating the concept. Informal validation occurs in the operating forces, professional schools and the institution at large in the form of field and map exercises and articles in professional journals. All are important in validating the concept. Acceptance takes some unavoidable period to grow. Some elements of a concept may gain acceptance more quickly than others. Some elements may gain acceptance while others are rejected. Just as it is in the development process, strong leadership is essential during the validation process. As a concept gains acceptance over time it transforms from a tentative hypothesis to a more-or-less accepted conclusion. Reflecting this, the language of the concept document may become increasingly assertive over the various iterations. By the time a concept is formally validated, the institution should be comfortable with it or should at least have had adequate time to weigh in on the subject.

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