SHOULD DETERRENCE FAIL:

War Termination and Campaign Planning

James W. Reed
Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Army

U. S. Naval War College
Newport, Rhode Island

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Our current operational doctrines display a serious blind spot with regard to the issue of conflict termination. How should the operational commander translate the political or military objectives of a conflict into war termination conditions to be achieved as the product of a campaign? This essay argues that war termination deserves equal billing with other aspects of the campaign planning process and should be guided by a set of principles or guidelines which, like other dimensions of that process, are best considered earlier rather than later. Based on a review of existing theory, doctrine, and recent historical illustrations, it suggests three requirements which war termination doctrine must address: operational doctrine should tell us something about how to define military conditions in a manner that relates those conditions to strategic aims; it should facilitate a military contribution to the bargaining process inherent in the terminal phase of war; and it should help to guide the transition from hostilities back toward a state of peace.

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Within the circle of those who occupy themselves with matters of military strategy and operational art, war termination has been a neglected topic both for academic study and, more particularly, for doctrinal development. Several reasons account for this. First, the concept of war termination tends to sit uncomfortably alongside more traditional Western views of a world operating according to rules divided into relatively distinct categories of peace and war. The American strategic culture in particular has been noted for a tendency to transition into the latter category with almost equal measures of reluctance and cataclysmic energy. Acting as a bridge between conditions of war and peace, war termination has occupied an uncertain niche in our strategic thinking.[1]

Studies of war termination have also tended to become a victim of political preferences with more conservative viewpoints espousing MacArthur's dictum that "war's objective is victory -- not prolonged indecision. In war, there is no substitute for victory." To the extent they implied compromise or modification in war aims, conservatives have found discussions of war termi-

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[1] Neglected, but not ignored. War termination studies were briefly fashionable in the formative years of nuclear war theorizing. The premier examples of this genre are Thomas Schelling, Arms and Influence (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966) and Morton Halperin, Limited War in the Nuclear Age (New York: John Wiley, 1963). Interest in the topic, at least at the strategic level, was resurrected following the American retreat from Vietnam, and Fred Iklé's Every War Must End (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971) represents one of the most thoughtful contributions to the subject during this period.

nation concepts to be anathema. Likewise, those of a more
liberal persuasion have found war termination studies, especially
those related to strategic nuclear warfare, distasteful since
they feared that "thinking about the unthinkable" might in fact
make the unthinkable more likely.

Above all, American strategic thinking has for good reason
given preference to concepts of deterrence while our operational
thinking has focused more on concepts of warfighting that would
allow us to "win" without resort to nuclear escalation. Recent
events, however, suggest that discussion of war termination
should perhaps be assigned a higher priority in our thinking
about strategic and operational matters.

This is not an essay about the recent Gulf War against Iraq,
but growing dissatisfaction with the apparent outcome of that war
suggests a need for more refined thinking about how we end our
involvement in wars.[2] Nor do we need to refer to the Gulf War to
find instances where Americans were dissatisfied with the end
state resulting from a particular war; in fact, discussion about
how we should (have) end(ed) a given war historically has tended
to be a more prominent feature of post-war, vice pre-war, debates
among Americans.

Moreover, as our national military strategy evolves away
from a fixation on global war with the Soviets toward a focus

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[2] For an early critique espousing the "tragic conclusion" that
the U.S. failed to win a "decisive victory" in the Gulf War, see
U.S. News & World Report Staff, Triumph Without Victory (New
York: Times Books/Random House, 1992), pp. 399-415.

on regional conflicts, war termination becomes an increasingly salient issue. At least from the American perspective, regional wars are by definition limited wars and, as such, war termination becomes an important concern to the degree the termination process reflects "an intention to limit the scope or duration of the war because that limitation accomplishes some desirable policy objective."[3]

As the link between a war's end state and the post-hostilities phase, conflict termination poses one set of difficult issues for the grand strategist and different, but equally challenging questions for the operational commander. In the broadest sense, the question for the theater commander is how to connect military means and military ends to the larger political objectives of a conflict. As it relates to campaign planning, the issue is this: how does the operational commander, generally a theater commander-in-chief, translate the political or military objectives of a conflict into military conditions to be achieved as the product of a campaign?

Our current operational doctrines display a serious blind spot with regard to the issue of conflict termination. The argument offered here is simple and straightforward: war termination deserves equal billing with other aspects of the campaign planning process and should be guided by a set of principles or guidelines which, like other dimensions of that process, are best

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[3] Stephen J. Cimbala, "The Endgame and War," in Stephen J. Cimbala and Keith A. Dunn, eds., Conflict Termination and Military Strategy: Coercion, Persuasion and War (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), p. 2.

considered earlier rather than later. We arrive at certain
guidelines by walking a path that will take us through an
examination of the military role in the conflict termination
process and a review of the current state theory and doctrine
relating to war termination. Historical examples, drawn in this
instance largely from our experience in the Korean War, provide a
basis for pressing existing operational doctrine toward practical
prescriptions that address war termination as an integral part of
the campaign planning process.

Bounding the Problem

Efforts to apply war termination principles to the campaign
planning process should begin by drawing certain preliminary
boundaries around our discussion. It must be recognized at the
outset that the subject can be approached from different points
along the spectrum of conflict, from strategic nuclear warfare to
low-intensity conflict, and the level at which one focuses the
discussion almost certainly influences the conclusions to be
drawn. What may be required to "end conflict on terms favorable
to the United States, its interest and its allies" clearly varies
as one moves along the conflict spectrum.[4] Since our current
military strategy emphasizes adaptive planning focused largely,
though not exclusively, on "major" and "lesser" regional
contingencies, which presumably would fall within the band of
mid-intensity conflict on our spectrum, it seems appropriate that

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[4] Department of Defense, National Military Strategy of the United
States (Washington, DC: GPO, January 1992), p. 5.

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our discussion here should be centered at the operational level within a mid-intensity war.[5]

Likewise, it should be noted that not all military campaigns seek war termination as an ultimate objective. As was the case in World War II, warfare even within a single theater may be conducted through a series of related campaigns which together seek to attain broad strategic objectives. It seems useful, therefore, to divide operational campaigns into separate categories representing <u>terminal campaigns</u> -- those that seek war termination as an end state -- and <u>enabling campaigns</u>, which serve some intermediate strategic objective short of ending the conflict. In World War II, Operation OVERLORD, the allied cross-channel attack and drive toward central Germany, provides an example of a terminal campaign aimed at ending the war in Europe. Similarly, OVERLORD's predecessor, Operation TORCH in 1942, aimed at expelling the Axis powers from French North Africa and offered no pretense that its success would end the war. Rather, as an enabling campaign, it served the strategic aim of engaging forces Axis early on while allowing time to marshal the manpower and matériel required to mount OVERLORD. Given this distinction, we note that our discussion here is limited to terminal campaigns (which, given a military strategy focused more on regional conflicts, are likely to be the more common pattern).

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[5] Reference to the operational level of war identifies the level at which campaign planning generally occurs. As the link between the strategic and tactical levels of war, "operational art is the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals . . . through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations." Department of the Army, <u>FM 100-5: Operations</u> (Washington, DC: GPO, May 1986), p. 10.

The concept of war termination itself requires some elucidation. Clearly, war termination implies something more than merely ending hostilities, for if that were the only criterion, then a simple decision to stop fighting would suffice. Rather, war termination is more appropriately viewed as a process, an interaction among the belligerents involving trade-offs, during which each side strives to attain its policy objectives within the limits of acceptable costs. "Victory," if defined as attaining the full measure of one's objectives, has little meaning without reference to the investment made to achieve those objectives.

If war termination, then, is properly viewed as a process, what marks the beginning and end point of that process? With the understanding that these points are not likely to be clearly defined in practice, it seems conceptually convenient to mark the beginning of the war termination process as that "point at which an informed, objective outside observer could predict the outcome of the war."[6] That is, it represents the point at which one side seems clearly destined to achieve its policy objectives at the expense of its adversary. A terminus for the war termination process is more readily identified: the cessation of hostilities, whether through exhaustion, capitulation, or negotiation of a cease fire.

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[6] Gay M. Hammerman, <u>Conventional Attrition and Battle Termination Criteria: A Study of War Termination</u> (Loring, VA: Defense Nuclear Agency Rpt. No. DNA-TR-81-224, August 1982), p. 11. Hammerman notes the coincidence between this concept and Clausewitz's "point of irreversibility:" the moment at which a commander's reserves become inferior to those of his adversary.

Our concern here, then, is the process of war termination as it relates to campaign planning. A focus on planning implies some level of premeditation which, in turn, is necessarily rooted in the premise that our planning activities are rationally based. Activities related to exiting a war, especially one that is going badly, may not always be rationally based; anger, a desire for revenge, concerns with prestige, etc., may enter into the calculus.[7] Logic, however, requires that our argument for inclusion of endgame considerations into the campaign planning process be based upon an assumption of rational behavior.

A Military Role?

It is not self-evident that the business (or, more exactly, the politics) of ending a war is one which properly admits the military commander. Paralleling a Western tendency to see a clear division between war and peace, many observers tend also to see an equally sharp demarcation between political and "purely military" activities. Under this view, the process of war termination displays greater political than military content and, thus, is more properly the province of civilian policy-makers vice military leaders. During the Franco-Prussian War, for example, Moltke urged upon the German Crown Prince his view that, even following the fall of Paris, Prussian military forces should continue to "fight this nation of liars to the very end . . . [so

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[7] For discussion of non-rational factors in war termination, see Michael I. Handel, <u>War Termination -- A Critical Survey</u> (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1978) and Iklé, <u>Every War Must End</u>.

that] . . . we can dictate whatever peace we like." When asked by the Crown Prince for the longer-term political implications of such an approach, Moltke replied merely, "I am concerned only with military matters."[8]

Both theory and practice, however, suggest the interrelationship between warfighting and the post-hostilities result and, thus, the consequent importance of the military contribution to the war termination process. Clausewitz admonished us that "war is only a branch of political activity; that it is in no sense autonomous . . . that war is simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means."[9]

War termination should be viewed, then, as the bridge over which armed conflict transitions into more peaceful forms of interaction. War termination may, in some circumstances, lead initially to a cease fire followed by negotiations during which the original political objectives are pursued at lower cost. The process of war termination displays a strong military as well as political component. To deny the political component is to risk making war something other than the servant of policy; equally, to deny the military dimension is to risk failure to attain the policy aims for which the war was fought. "If the goal of the political decision-maker," William Staudenmaier has correctly observed, "is to resolve the political issues for which the war was begun, then the emphasis of military strategy should shift

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[8] Michael Howard, The Franco-Prussian War (New York: Collier Books, 1969), p. 436.
[9] Carl von Clausewitz, On War, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 605.

from its narrow preoccupation on destroying enemy forces to a consideration of how military means may be used to resolve political issues."[10]

If military strategy should concern itself with applying military means to attain political ends, then it is equally appropriate that our doctrine at the operational level (the "employment of military forces to attain strategic goals") address matters of war termination.

The State of the Art

In the past, consideration of war termination has centered almost exclusively at the strategic level. Such studies have typically identified various patterns by which wars end, which may include: attrition or exhaustion of one side; capitulation by one party; imposition of a settlement by a third party; or the internal dissolution of one of the belligerents.[11] Clausewitz reminds us, however, that political interactions do not cease with the onset of war, and either implicit or explicit bargaining and negotiation -- Schelling's "diplomacy of violence" -- occur as an inherent aspect of war through, and even beyond, the cessation of hostilities. Empirical data bear out this observation; historically, fully two-thirds of inter-state conflicts have

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[10] William O. Staudenmaier, "Conflict Termination in the Nuclear Era," in Cimbala and Dunn, Conflict Termination and Military Strategy, p. 30.
[11] Cimbala, "The Endgame and War," p. 1-2.

ended as a result of negotiations either before or after an armistice.[12]

Viewing conflict termination as a process displaying certain attributes related to bargaining or negotiation, classical strategists have generally agreed upon several broad precepts that ought to guide the process at the strategic level. According to Gregory Treverton, these include:[13]

> the imperative of planning for termination before the war begins;

> the need to sustain communications with the adversary even while fighting;

> the logic of utilizing natural pauses, thresholds and prominent features as bases for compromise, even tacit ones;

> the value of holding forces as further deterrents or bargaining chips, rather than using them; and

> the difficulty of verifying any agreement, especially tacit ones, in the noise of battle, and thus the imperative of some cooperative measures, or even unilateral gestures, to demonstrate good faith or reinforce pledges about intentions, again even while the battle is raging.

From this broader strategic perspective, military forces contribute to conflict termination not only by direct measures designed to achieve particular policy objectives. Equally

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[12] Paul R. Pillar, Negotiating Peace: War Termination as a Bargaining Process (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 25. Pillar's observation is drawn from a survey of 142 conflicts over the period 1800-1980. His analysis suggests that 68% of inter-state conflicts, and 48% of all categories of conflict, have ended through some process involving negotiation between belligerent parties.
[13] Gregory F. Treverton, "Ending Major Coalition Wars," in Cimbala and Dunn, Conflict Termination and Military Strategy, p. 93.

important, military forces can support the tacit endgame bargaining process by inflicting losses on the adversary that affect his cost-versus-benefit calculus and create an incentive to cease hostilities.

Transitioning from the strategic to the operational level, one might expect to find somewhat less ethereal guidance on the incorporation of war termination considerations into campaign planning. However, to the extent current policy or doctrinal publications address conflict termination at all, they offer little to the operational planner that is of any greater use than the classical strategic precepts. As noted earlier, the National Military Strategy addresses the issue only in the broadest strokes by stating that, should deterrence fail, we should seek to "end conflict on terms favorable to the United States, its interests and its allies."[14]

Nor does the armed forces' keystone doctrinal publication on joint warfare offer guidance on how to translate this national objective into operational terms.[15] In fact, Joint Pub 1's conceptual division of the joint campaign planning process into four distinct parts (the operational concept, the logistic concept, the deployment concept, and the organizational concept)

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[14] National Military Strategy, p. 5. Note also that the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act now requires the Secretary of Defense to provide the military services "written policy guidance for the preparation and review of contingency plans." Published annually, the Contingency Planning Guidance provides the SecDef an opportunity to go beyond the general language of the national military strategy and prescribe more specifically requirements for war termination.

[15] Department of Defense, Joint Pub 1: Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces (Washington, D.C.: GPO, November 1991). Reference is to Chapter IV, "Joint Warfare."

is perhaps most striking for what it omits -- that is, any explicit reference to war termination -- than for what it includes.

A review of service doctrines reveals little more in the way of operational insight into the problem of war termination. In suggesting fundamental questions which define the nature of operational art, the Army's FM 100-5 hints at least indirectly at the war termination issue: "What military conditions must be produced in the theater of war or operations to achieve the strategic goal?"[16] That fundamental question cannot be fully answered without addressing equally crucial considerations related to war termination. Having posed the central question, however, the Army's doctrine stops short in at least two respects: it fails to offer guidance on how to relate military conditions to strategic aims; and, equally important, it falls silent on the question of how those military conditions serve the transition from war to peace, a fundamental aspect of conflict termination.

Marine Corps doctrine similarly recognizes the importance of war termination considerations in the campaign planning process:

> [The] focus on the military strategic aim is the single overriding element of campaign design . . . Given the strategic aim as our destination, our next step is to determine the desired end state, the military

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[16] Department of the Army, FM 100-5: Operations (Washington, D.C.: GPO, May 1986), p 10. In fairness, it must be noted that the 1986 version of FM 100-5 sets out the Army's AirLand Battle (ALB) doctrine, which is currently being replaced by a successor doctrine, AirLand Operations (ALO). Although yet to be formally promulgated, it is anticipated that ALO will deal more explicitly with issues related to conflict termination.

conditions we must realize in order to reach that destination, those necessary conditions which we expect by their existence will provide us our established aim . . . . From the envisioned end state we can develop the operational objectives which, taken in combination, will achieve those conditions.[17]

As with the Army's operational doctrine, Marine Corps doctrine does little more than cite the necessity to determine a "desired end state" that is somehow related to larger strategic purposes. In contrast to their treatment of, for example, logistical, deployment, or organizational concepts, neither joint nor service doctrines currently suggest principles according to which war termination concepts should be integrated into the campaign planning process. To ensure that our operational planning effectively serves the requirements of our national military strategy, this doctrinal gap is one we can ill-afford not to fill in.

Expanding the Doctrinal Frontier

A concern for war termination suggests three fundamental requirements that our joint and separate service operational doctrines must address. First, conflict termination doctrine must assist planners in defining military conditions and relating those conditions to strategic aims; second, it must contribute to the tacit bargaining process inherent in the terminal phases of a war; and finally, it must offer guidance on how best to transition from active hostilities back toward a state of peace.

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[17] Department of the Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, FMFM 1-1: Campaigning (Washington, D.C.: GPO, January 1990), pp. 33-35.

Since it is highly dependent upon the nature of the conflict scenario, defining terminal military conditions that relate to overall strategic aims is perhaps the most challenging of these tasks. The difficulty of the task, however, also underscores its importance. At the strategic level, Morton Halperin has suggested that "unspecified, non-rigid objectives increase the chances of arriving at an acceptable compromise and eliminate the domestic costs which would stem from a failure to gain a stated objective."[18] Operationally, however, more specific definition of termination conditions appears to be desirable; there is, after all, little to be gained by confusing or deceiving ourselves. And it must be recognized that conditions defined early in a war -- ideally, even prior to the outbreak of hostilities -- may change as events unfold. Nonetheless, the process of clearly defining terminal conditions (at least to ourselves) is an important one, since it requires careful dialogue between civilian and military leadership which may, in turn, offer some greater assurance that the defined end state is both politically acceptable and militarily attainable.

Our second requirement for doctrine recognizes that war termination is, as noted earlier, a game within a game involving aspects of bargaining and negotiation. Warfighting doctrine must be cognizant of this less visible aspect of war termination which aims at the opponent's decision process. Simply stated, by manipulating the cost-versus-gain equation, a commander's operational decisions can influence an opponent's strategic

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[18] Halperin, Limited War in the Nuclear Age, p. 130.

decision-making. In the recent Gulf War, for instance, the U.S. Central Command's sweeping envelopment maneuver was brilliantly effective not only because it neutralized the Republican Guard forces, the Iraqi Army's center of gravity. It also placed a significant allied force in position to threaten Baghdad, thus creating an additional incentive for the Iraqis to agree to an early cease-fire. An operational decision had affected an opponent's strategic calculus by creating additional allied leverage.

At the operational level, then, the military contribution should serve to increase (or at least not decrease) the leverage available to national decision-makers during the terminal phases of a war. This task becomes more difficult when a war goes badly and the initial objectives are not attained. However, even a "totally defeated" power such as Japan in August 1945 retains some leverage: Japan, after all, had a choice between cooperative submission to Allied occupation or continued resistance.

Lastly, recalling the dog in the old joke who eventually catches the fire truck, our doctrine on conflict termination should cause us to think through the implications of successfully attaining our objectives. It should suggest ways to transition from battlefield success into a post-hostilities environment in a manner that preserves and reinforces our political objectives. During this aspect of the war termination process, the role of various civilian national or international agencies may become increasingly prominent, and particular responsibilities may transfer from the military to the civilian domain at this stage.

The various civil affairs functions, especially refugee control and humanitarian assistance, come to mind as examples in which a transition toward greater civil relief agency involvement may be prudent.

As the bridge between war and peace, war termination doctrine should address the issue of when and how to transition out of a military-dominant role in the post-hostilities phase. History is replete with examples of warfare which solved one set of problems only to give rise to other, if less acute, problems. The aftermath of the 1989 U.S. invasion of Panama typifies the challenges likely to be a common product of regional war: a decapitated government initially incapable of managing basic governmental functions; a sizeable refugee problem; and a widespread lapse in civil law and order. Our doctrine must recognize that effective war termination must link the war-fighting phases of a conflict with the post-hostilities environment.

For those who have considered the issue of conflict termination at the strategic level, the Korean War has often provided a common basis for discussion of problems inherent in the process. And at the operational level as well, the Korean case brings to light many of these requirements for war termination doctrine.

War Termination in the Korean Case

According to the definition adopted earlier, the Korean War had clearly entered its terminal phase by June 1951. By that date, an informed, objective outside observer could certainly have predicted the general outline of the eventual outcome. MacArthur's brilliant stroke at Inchon in September 1950 had given United Nations forces the upper hand and had prompted an upward revision in U.S. war aims from restoration of the status quo ante bellum along the 38th parallel toward reunification of the entire peninsula under South Korean control. Pursuit of this expanded objective triggered massive Chinese intervention in November, prompting MacArthur's laconic comment that, "We face an entirely new war."

By March 1951, however, the Chinese offensive had effectively been blunted, and an objective observer could certainly have concluded that the Chinese and North Koreans, having thrown their best punch, had been denied the opportunity to achieve their maximum political objective of unification of the peninsula under communist rule. As the United Nations pursued its Spring offensive, the Eighth Army Commander, General James Van Fleet would later comment that ". . . in June 1951 we had the Chinese whipped. They were definitely gone. They were in awful shape. During the last week in May we captured more than 10,000 prisoners."[19]

Likewise, while the United States had not necessarily been denied its maximum objective, the evident costs of pursuing

[19] Bernard Brodie, War and Politics (New York: MacMillan Publishing, 1973), p.92.

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reunification under a South Korean regime, together with growing anxiety over Soviet intentions in Europe, caused the Truman administration to step back from that expanded war aim. Restoration of the 38th parallel accompanied by an armistice at an early date became the principal American objective. Throughout the twenty-four month stalemate that followed, continued hostilities produced only marginal adjustments in each side's position along the 38th parallel, while indirect and direct bargaining addressed issues that were largely ancillary to the original war aims of each.

Mindful of MacArthur's earlier misfortune, Van Fleet elected to halt the United Nations offensive in mid-June along the 38th parallel, stating in his memoirs that, "The seizure of the land between the truce line and the Yalu would have merely meant the seizure of more real estate."

Bernard Brodie, among others, has argued that Eighth Army's operational decision to halt its Spring offensive at mid-peninsula forfeited an opportunity to terminate the war at an early date:

> The reason for continuing the extraordinarily successful enterprise that the U.N. offensive had become had nothing to do with the acquisition of more real estate. Its purpose should have been to continue maximum pressure on the disintegrating Chinese armies as a means of getting them not only to request but actually to conclude an armistice. The line they finally settled for two years later, or something like that line, might have been achieved in far less time if we had meanwhile continued the pressure that was disintegrating their armies.[20]

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[20] Brodie, War and Politics, p. 94. Brodie suggests the real reason the offensive was halted was that in June 1951 the Chinese

Negotiations co-mingled with intermittent military action by both sides continued fitfully for two years. Not until Eisenhower credibly threatened in February 1953 to resume the United Nations offensive with the use of nuclear weapons did the Chinese truly begin to bargain in earnest.[21] By July 1953 both sides had agreed to an armistice under terms not significantly different from those proposed two years earlier.

Our earlier analysis suggested that, with respect to conflict termination, operational doctrine should tell us something about how to define military conditions in a manner that relates those conditions to strategic aims; that it should facilitate a military contribution to the bargaining process inherent in the terminal phases of a war; and that it should help to guide the transition from hostilities back toward a state of peace. The terminal phase of the Korean War illustrates the potentially adverse consequences that may attend a campaign which fails to address these issues.

If by June 1951 restoration of the 38th parallel accompanied by an armistice at an early date had become the principal American strategic objective, the historical record does not indicate an effort by planners at either the operational or strategic level to define explicit, observable conditions that would achieve all three aspects of this strategic aim. Occupation of the 38th parallel speaks for itself, but what of the

had hinted through Indian intermediaries of their interest in an armistice.
[21] For a perceptive analysis of the role of nuclear weapons played in terminating the Korean War, see Halperin, Limited War in the Nuclear Age, pp. 47-50.

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other two components: a cessation of hostilities (an armistice); and a time constraint (at an early date)? What specific military conditions might achieve all three dimensions of the strategic objective? As opposed to a positive statement of specific operational conditions that should be sought, planners seemed more concerned with framing operational conditions in a negative sense -- that is, statements of what should not be done (e.g. do not go back to the Yalu) given a belief that a particular result would either be ineffectual (just "the seizure of more real estate") or counterproductive (fears of Chinese or Russian escalation). Decision-makers seemed guided by a belief that holding the 38th parallel would over some ill-defined period of time result in some unspecified level of increased casualties or other costs to the Chinese that would eventually produce an acceptable truce. What level of costs and what period of time?

Clearly, answers to these questions cannot always, if ever, be known with certainty, but by defining military conditions with a high degree of specificity, operational planners allow civilian leaders the opportunity both to examine critically the assumptions the underpin the plan and to assess whether the military conditions will, in fact, accomplish their intended political objectives. Again, we underscore the importance of communication between military and civilian leaders in order to ensure congruence between operational outcomes and intended political objectives. Defining operational objectives in explicit, unambiguous terms will do much to ensure this congruence.

If one accepts, as this writer does, Brodie's view that the U.S. Eighth Army erred in failing to press its June 1951 offensive beyond the pre-hostilities demarcation line, perhaps northward to the peninsula's narrow neck, the consequences of that omission -- 12,000 additional U.S. casualties over the following two years -- provides a compelling argument for the advantages that accrue if military forces are used to gain greater leverage during the war termination process. In the regional wars likely to be the dominant pattern for the foreseeable future, adversaries are prone to seek the attainment of limited objectives, with the understanding that some trade-offs are likely to be required on both sides if the conflict is to remain limited. As in Korea, as in the more recent Persian Gulf conflict, war termination becomes a contest in which political leverage borne of battlefield success is the dominant theme. This may at times require planners to define operational objectives which exceed bottomline politcal objectives in order to gain leverage to assist in the expeditious termination of hostilities and the effective transition to a post-hostilities regime.

Some Guidelines for Campaign Planners

Our argument throughout has been that the current gap in our operational doctrines regarding conflict termination seriously hampers our ability to plan effective military campaigns. Working from commonly accepted war termination precepts at the strategic level and armed with an appreciation of war termination

issues in recent conflicts, we propose some tentative first steps
toward an appropriate doctrine in this arena.

▶ Consider identifying a distinct war termination phase in
the campaign planning process. Simply stated, war termination is
too fundamental an issue to be subordinated as a lesser included
component of some other aspect of the campaign planning process.

▶ Emphasize a regressive, or backward-planning, approach to
campaign development. Ever mindful of Fred Iklé's caution that
decision-makers not take the first step toward war without
considering the last, every aspect of a campaign plan should be
designed and evaluated according to contributions made or effect
upon the explicitly defined end state to be achieved. This can
be accomplished most efficiently in a regressive planning
sequence.

▶ Define the operational conditions to be produced during
the terminal phase of the campaign in explicit, unambiguous
terms. While loosely defined, flexible objectives may be
desirable at the strategic level, the absence of definition or
detail in operational objectives may produce unintended
consequences in the course of a campaign. More important, the
process of defining operational objectives with a high degree of
clarity should prompt increased communication between the
civilian and military leadership that will help to ensure
congruence between operational objectives and the larger policy
aims of a campaign.

▶ Consider establishing operational objectives in support of the war termination process that exceed the baseline political objectives of the campaign. Remember that the war termination process is a part of a larger implicit bargaining process, even while hostilities continue, and that the military contribution can significantly affect the leverage available to influence that process. This may include territory or (from your opponent's perspective) other high-value objectives whose possession would enhance the government's ability to secure a favorable political outcome.

▶ Consider how your efforts to eliminate or degrade your opponent's command and control may impact, positively or negatively, on your efforts to achieve particular objectives. Will your opponent be able to effect a cease fire or otherwise control the actions of his forces?

▶ View war termination not as the end of hostilities but as the transition to a new post-conflict phase characterized by both civil and military problems. This consideration may imply an important role for various civil affairs functions. It may also imply a requirement to plan the transfer of certain responsibilities to a national, international, or non-governmental agency.

▶ Continually evaluate the impact of other dimensions of the campaign plan, e.g. rules of engagement, on the objectives of the war termination phase.

Viewed independently, none of these proposed guidelines appears startling; some will even suggest, quite correctly, that these prescriptions are, like so many other aspects of warfighting doctrine, more exemplary of common sense than of any particular revealed wisdom. What is startling, however, is the obvious absence of any coherent approach for conflict termination in any of our current warfighting doctrines.

Concluding Observations

We have repeatedly made the point here that the war termination component of a campaign plan represents a transitional phase: a transition from war to peace; a transition from a military-dominant role toward a civilian-dominant role; a transition from a set of circumstances and problems generally familiar to operational planners toward others with which they may be decidedly less so. These points reinforce the importance of a high level of dialogue and coordination between civilian and military decision-makers regarding the conflict termination process. As Fred Iklé notes, "In preparing a major military operation, military leaders and civilian officials can effectively work together . . . to create a well-meshed integrated plan."[22] The ability of military leaders to contribute to that joint planning process will in part depend upon the extent to which they have carefully considered the challenges posed by the war termination problem in the period before deterrence fails.

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[22] Iklé, Every War Must End, p. 85.

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