

**Dr. Edward Kaplan's Opening Remarks on
Military Education and the Changing Roles of Military Academies
As Delivered at the OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation
Wednesday, May 29**

I welcome the opportunity to represent the U.S. Army War College today to discuss this topic. To begin, I'd like to move to my agenda slide. This is a brief overview of what I'll be discussing today in the next few minutes, and as you can see, it's based on the [concept] note that was just read.

But first I'd like to discuss the Army War College, where I work. We are focused on strategic education. The Army War College has two programs: a resident program which takes 380 students in the ranks of lieutenant colonel, colonel, and civilian equivalents, and puts them through a one-year course; and we also have a distance course for 400 students per year, which lasts two years.

We prepare them for service at the theater level and above. We like to think of our curriculum as divided into three main pillars: responsible command, which is the interaction of strategy and leadership; national defense, which is the interaction of strategy and policy; and military science, which is military force as a component of strategy in service of national objectives.

Part of all of that is giving our students the ability to provide military advice to civilians. Students are experts in military power; decision makers may not be, and our students become their expert advisors. In the context of today's discussion, this means that our students have to understand the changes in the strategic environment, the changes themselves, to understand the political and technological contexts, and also how those changes affect the application of military force. This is where events like the Russia-Ukraine war have their impact on our curriculum.

So now to move on to the specific questions posed. First, the key challenges in military education. Time, people, and money are finite, so I'll go through each of those to explain how that has an impact.

First, time. There are only so many days in the year that we have our students in our resident program. I have 198 days in which to provide academic instruction, and that means that, to speak colloquially, whatever comes on the plate, something else has to come off the plate. Many stakeholders have a say in what goes into the curriculum. First and foremost is the Army Chief of Staff,

General Randy A. George, who emphasizes warfighting and multi-domain operations. Our Joint Staff and our joint community, through the joint professional military education system, also have a very strong voice in what we teach. This is done through the system of outcome-based military education and then through the specifics of our joint learning areas and special areas of emphasis. Our third largest stakeholder, co-equal, is Congress - its general committees, which are assigned duties with the armed forces, and also individual members who express interest in the things that we teach to our students. All of that means that we have a lot of decisions to make every year, and we have an 18-month process by which we decide what we change in the curriculum for a given year of instruction. This process is run by our faculty. So, that's time.

Second, people. The limitations on people refer to both limitations that arise from students and faculty.

For students, their knowledge is deep - our students have been experts in military power for 20-plus years, but their knowledge is stove-piped. They know a certain thing in a very deep way, but they don't know everything they need to know. Even though they have a wide spectrum of knowledge and capabilities, they still have much to learn, and they have limited time, as we just discussed, in which to do it. We talk about our levels of learning using Bloom's Taxonomy: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and ultimately creating at the top level. How far can we get students who have no or limited knowledge in a subject up that spectrum of Bloom's Taxonomy? It's different for every student because they come in at different levels with different kinds of knowledge.

Faculty expertise is also finite. We have emerging issues that can demand new fields of knowledge, and my faculty turnover is going to be a certain number every year. I can bring in new people, or I can have existing faculty learn new things, but that happens at a measured pace.

Money is also a limiting factor, even in a well-funded system like the U.S. professional military education system. Some topics, particularly new technology, can be expensive to teach at scale. It's difficult to get hardware and software licenses for many of the new emerging technologies in order to construct lessons at scale for all of our students. Money is also a limiting factor in student travel,

being able to go to the places where these new ideas and technologies are being developed and used. Furthermore, money used for new technology or for student travel cannot be used to make up instructor shortfalls. This is always a decision that we have to make here going into a given year.

So, what's the effect of strategic competition that's already visible in our curriculum at the War College? I'll start with what's in the bottom box there.

Our starting point for our curriculum is the National Security Strategy, which is published in every administration. The most recent one states very explicitly that we are in the midst of a strategic competition to shape the future of the international order. That strategic competition is at the root of what we do. It's operationalized by our Joint Staff J7 through the Chairman's Vision for Professional Military Education and the Office of Professional Military Education Policy, and specifically, as I briefly touched on earlier, the idea of special areas of emphasis. Every two years, the chairman asks the larger community what areas our professional military education students have to focus on in order to adapt to the emerging environment, and those become our special areas of emphasis. Two of the three that we currently have are directly tied to strategic competition: strategic deterrence in the 21st century and global force management.

So what does this mean in practice? Well, it has had two direct effects on our curriculum right now at the War College. The first has to do with our general curriculum. We have to adapt it to reflect current interstate events. Our general and enduring curriculum emphasizes tools and models for understanding interstate competition and conflict. To look at the current environment, there are a few that we have brought to the fore in order to help our students cope with the current environment:

1. The theoretical understanding of deterrence and compellence coming together in coercion theory.
2. Understanding the spectrum of conflict, from competition to crisis and conflict, and then back to peace. And within that spectrum of conflict, understanding how we use instruments of national power in concert to build coalitions to achieve national objectives. And then if conflict eventuates, how to execute multi-domain operations.

Also, we have adapted our general enduring curriculum to make sure that our case studies are relevant to studying competitors in the international and regional space. We look at China as the pacing threat and Russia as an immediate challenge.

Second, beyond our enduring curriculum, we've added a new course, and that was at the direction of the Office of the Secretary of Defense. They directed that professional military education institutions achieve very specific outcomes with respect to China. Our response at the Army War College was to create a capstone course in our curriculum and to rework our regional studies to understand how China and Russia operate in every region.

The third question was, "What are the effects of the rapid technological advancements that are changing the character of war on the existing practices of military education?" Here, I would say our task is having our students avoid thinking that everything is changing just because many things are changing. To do that, we think about, as was implied by the nature of the question, the distinctions between the nature and the character of war.

The nature of war is unchanged. It's violent, political, and governed by chance. The tremendous death tolls on the battlefield in Ukraine attest to the continuing violence. The political conflicts within the states and between the states that are involved in the conflict are certainly a testament to the political nature of the war continuing. And then chance is also demonstrated very clearly by the current conflict, as human factors such as performance under pressure throughout the chain of command are unchanged. Those are affected by the fog of war persisting because it continues to be a cognitive limitation in the minds of commanders, unaffected by technology.

That brings me to the character of war, while the nature is unchanged. How is the character changing? I think an apt analogy for the character of war here is that we are in a similar position to where the military world was in 1936 in Spain, trying to figure out how to put together all of the new technologies that had emerged over the past 20 years on the battlefield into a coherent whole. The war in Ukraine is very similar to that. We're looking at what's happening there, trying to understand it, and what that means for the future of conflict.

Some of the specific things that we've observed:

- An incredible compression of time. The need to make split-second judgments on the battlefield has increased dramatically.
- Also, very clearly, there's a return to large-scale combat operations. Counterinsurgency operations have been de-emphasized in our curriculum to reflect that.
- In the way of describing strategy that has three main approaches of attrition, exhaustion, and annihilation, we look at battles of annihilation where destroying the enemy's field forces is the way to achieve military success. Those battles have become less and less probable over time, and we have a return to attrition and exhaustion.
- We also see the emergence of a littoral area within airspace above the ground but below the area in which effective manned aircraft operate. This new area has new rules for engagement, and of course, drones are at the center of that. One very important consequence is that because drones operate in a way that we cannot establish air superiority over as we were able to before, if something can be seen, it can be destroyed. Visibility on the battlefield has changed how operations take place on the ground.
- In the U.S. context, that is particularly important for our command and control systems and a danger to the large, fixed headquarters we've had in the past.

That brings me to the final question, which is one of the most significant implications of the war on the system for higher military education.

First, as I briefly touched on, we have a move away from counterinsurgency operations, for good or ill. We have moved to large-scale combat operations, whether we like it or not. Large-scale combat operations are going to happen whether or not we study them, so it's something we have to examine.

We have the emergence of new domains that we have to examine in the context of this war - domains like space and cyber. And then also, the emergence of artificial intelligence and how that impacts the battlefield, and most certainly information warfare, in which we are getting a master class from both sides on how information warfare can be waged.

All of that, of course, means that we have to restructure our faculty experience as well as our curriculum. Unchanged, though, is our core mission, as I alluded to at the beginning. We see that as responsible command, national defense, and military science.

To conclude, we have profound changes at the Army War College from ongoing strategic competition in the structure of our curriculum and faculty, but our mission is unchanged: to educate officers to win the nation's wars.

Thank you. That concludes my presentation.



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Military education and the changing roles of military academies

Overall Briefing: UNCLASSIFIED



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Agenda

- Introduction
- Key Challenges in Military Education
- Effect of Growing Strategic Competition on Senior Service Colleges
- Effect of Rapid Technological Advances and Changes in the Character of War on Strategic Military Education
- Implications for Professional Military Education

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STRENGTH *and* WISDOM

Introduction

- Responsible Command
- National Defense
- Military Science

- 10 month/2 year program for Lieutenant Colonels & Colonels



Educating for Uncertainty

Key Challenges in Military Education

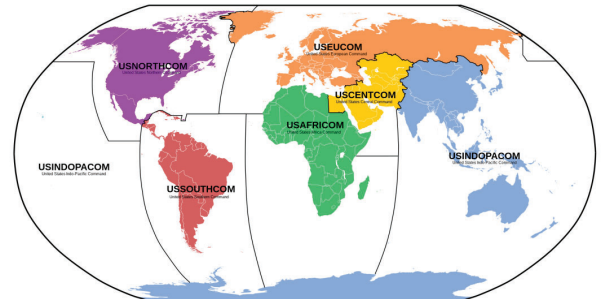
- Time
 - 198 academic days
 - Many stakeholders
- People: Fragmented Expertise
- Money: Generating Force



Finite Resources

Effects of Growing Strategic Competition

- Directed by National Security Strategy and Reinforced in Defense Department
- Interstate Competition and Conflict
- Strategic Deterrence
- Global Force Management



“We are in the midst of a strategic competition to shape the future of the international order.” – 2022 National Security Strategy

Changes in the Character of War on Strategic Military Education

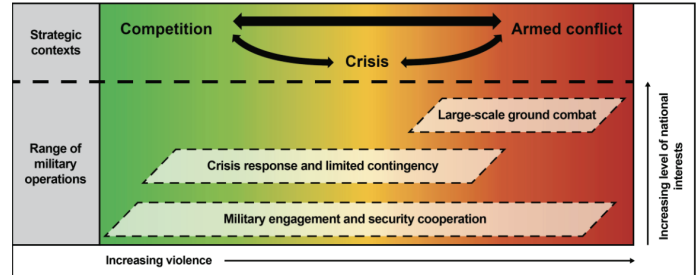
- Nature: Violence, Politics, Chance
- Character
 - Compression of Time
 - Attrition and Exhaustion
 - Large Scale Combat Operations



Transforming in Contact

Ukraine War Implications for Professional Military Education

- You may not be interested in Large Scale Combat Operations, but Large Scale Combat Operations are interested in you
- Core Mission Unchanged



“Victory smiles upon those who anticipate the changes in the character of war, not upon those who wait to adapt themselves after the changes occur.” - Douhet

Questions?

