

LESSON 14

WAR TERMINATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

“CENTCOM’s lightning war was over. It had been billed as a 100-hour blitz, but three years later it was still an unfinished war. Recalled Gordon Brown, the Foreign Service officer who served as Schwarzkopf’s chief foreign policy advisor at CENTCOM, ‘we never did have a plan to terminate the war.’ ”

—The Generals’ War

Lesson Introduction

Clausewitz stated, “War is merely the continuation of policy by other means.” This implies that policy will continue, via non-violent means, once the other “violent” means are concluded. All too often, little, if any, consideration is given toward this critical transition. Most importantly, the President of the U.S. (POTUS) and the Secretary of Defense must provide the warfighters with guidance regarding how to end a war, or how to establish the criteria by which the war should end, or how to achieve the end state desired after the war concludes. Hopefully, this guidance will provide the policy bridge from war to peace. It will also provide for a transition from the military element of national power to the other elements of national power, such as the political, the diplomatic, and the economic.

This lesson introduces the concepts of war termination and conflict resolution, two related but different concepts. Both will serve as tremendous challenges to all associated with war and conflict. Currently, U.S. military doctrine only briefly discusses war termination; there is no exhaustive doctrinal reference and certainly none for conflict resolution.

Student Requirements by Educational Objective

Requirement 1

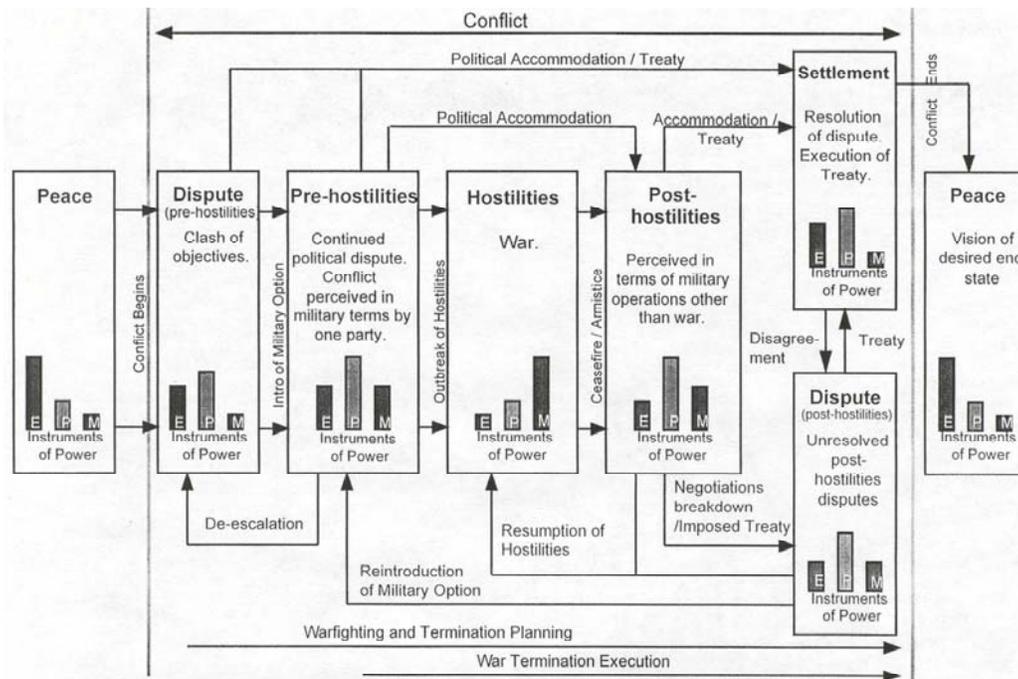
Objective 1. Understand the relationship between the nature of conflict and the challenges associated with its termination. [JPME Area 1(a)(c), 3(a)(c)(d), 4(a)(b)(e)]

Objective 2. Understand the planning considerations and complexities in the transition from combat operations to cease-fire implementation and the military’s involvement as relations between combatants normalize. [JPME Area 1(a)(c), 3(a)(c)(d), 4(a)(b)]

Read:

- Joint Pub 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*, 10 September 2001, pp. I-10 to I-12 and pp. III-24 (paragraph n. Termination) to III-25 (6. Key Planning Considerations) (4 pages)
- Joint Pub 5-00.1, *Joint Doctrine for Campaign Planning*, 25 January 2002, pp. II-4 (start at c. Conflict Termination) to II-5 (stop at d. Military Conditions) (2 pages)
- MCDP 1-2, *Campaigning*, 1 August 1997, pp. 50 (Conflict Termination) to 52 (Campaign Design: Two Examples) (3 pages)
- Air Command and Staff College Thesis, "Planning and Execution of Conflict Termination," by Sqn. Ldr. Allotey, et.al., pp. 84 to 94 and 106 to 118 (23 pages)
- "Operational Planning and Conflict Termination" by John R. Boulé II, *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn/Winter 2001-02, pp. 97 to 102 (reprinted, 7 pages).

If the process of conducting a war is complicated, the process of concluding one is even more so. Although wars can begin by the action of a single party, they can only be terminated by both parties and, therefore, require reciprocal action. And while harmonizing grand strategy with military strategy is essential in warfighting, such harmonization becomes even more important during war termination. This is so because the ultimate aim of war termination should be conflict resolution that provides a basis for a lasting peace. (See the following schematic) Admittedly, the line between war and war termination may be a fine one that is not always apparent to the participants, for even an opponent who is down and out and certain of losing the war may remain capable of inflicting significant damage. For example, the Germans were able to inflict some 170,000 casualties on the Red Army in the very last days of the Battle for Berlin.



Conflict Resolution Framework

The classic means for terminating a war is a peace treaty. However, the use of a treaty presumes some measure of consensus on international legal norms that may not exist. By one count of the 311 wars that took place from 1480 to 1970, only 137 ended formally with a peace treaty. Several other terms are associated with war termination. They are as follows:

- **Cease-fire**, in which belligerents agree to refrain from hostilities.
- An **armistice** or a **truce**, in which parties agree to a cessation of hostilities for a limited time with the intent of facilitating negotiation of a settlement. Of the 21 large-scale interstate wars in the 20th century, eight were terminated by armistice or cease-fire agreements.
- **Capitulation**, in which one party unilaterally recognizes its inability to continue military action.

Each method of terminating hostilities carries with it different implications for the war-fighter on the scene.

Commanders and their staffs must consider the operational implications brought forth by a transition from open hostilities to a cease-fire and the eventual resumption of normal relations. An approach that is too harsh may rekindle hostilities or negate diplomatic efforts. An approach that suggests weakness may cause a defeated opponent to question

U.S. resolve in concluding the war, perhaps endangering friendly military forces. The case study in Requirement Two offers interesting examples. The local populace may be in dire need of humanitarian assistance. Tactical and operational intelligence activities need to be refocused rapidly. Local governments and services may need to be reestablished in war-torn regions. Reliable and secure communication methods must be established with the formerly belligerent forces along with security services to preclude any flare-ups in the recently concluded hostilities. Future communications with belligerents may be difficult on the tactical and operational levels if the foe was subjected to an effective information operations campaign. The former foe may question any information sent to them, fearing deception and manipulation. Any delay in disengaging opposing forces may result in additional lethal engagements as the tempo of decision making and time continue to become more compressed.

Because war termination tends to occur in an ad hoc fashion with little planning, it is not surprising that at the present time there are no doctrinal US military publications that adequately address the subject. War termination is only briefly mentioned in general terms within Joint doctrine. Because the balance of forces at the end of the war shape the nature of the termination process, considerations for terminating the war should be addressed when planning for the war's execution. Refinement of the **termination plan** is critical and could certainly be considered a **sequel** to a well-developed OPLAN.

Listed below are some thought-provoking war termination comments that were provided to the Marine Corps students by Jane Hollis of the Carnegie Institute in 1993. They are a good point of departure when thinking about war termination:

- Warfare matters less in conflicts where possible compromise solutions exist than in conflicts where they do not.
- *How* a war ends may be more important than *when* it ends.
- Battles are evaluated prospectively, not retrospectively.
- Over time, other factors may come to matter as wars tend to become more internationalized.
- The matter of who accepts surrender is a vital one; it determines who will control the turf and who will decide future legitimacy.

The Air Command and Staff College thesis is a good treatment of war termination from a planner's perspective. Pages 84 to 94 provide planning considerations while pages 106 to 118 provide a checklist of war termination considerations when planning a campaign.

Requirement 2

Objective 3. Define and understand the differences between war termination and conflict resolution. [JPME Area 1(e), 3(d)(e), 4(a)]

Read:

- “Making Peace Settlements Work,” by Chester A. Crocker and Fen Osler Hampson, *Foreign Policy*, Fall 1996, pp. 1 to 14 (14 pages)

When considering the differences between the two processes of war termination and conflict resolution, one must bear in mind some fundamental differences among various types of war that can range along the Clausewitzian continuum from armed observation to absolute war. Wars can be peripheral or limited, or they can be great power coalition wars (sometimes labeled total war). They might be civil (internal) wars or interstate wars. From the standpoint of driving war termination, the distinction among types of war may have less impact than the balance of military forces: Is the approaching victory decisive or does the war end by mutual exhaustion and stalemate? The particular balance of military forces at the war’s end has different implications and consequences for the shape of war termination. In short, war termination lies in close association to the military element of national power.

Different kinds of wars require quite different factors for successful conflict resolution. For example, great power coalition wars such as World War I and World War II do not merely produce winners and losers on the battlefield, but they also break apart international orders while altering the fundamental hierarchy among states. Consequently, conflict resolution for great power coalition wars often requires a comprehensive rebuilding of the international order. Even though the military element of national power has a support role in conflict resolution, the responsibility rests primarily on the diplomatic and economic elements of national power. In contrast to great power coalition wars, peripheral or limited wars do not need a settlement that refashions the entire edifice of interstate relations. However, the settlement must be **fair** or **just** if the peace is to last. For either kind of war, conflict resolution must generate some sense of legitimacy among participants so that even the defeated can be reconciled to the terms of the settlement. Without some sense of legitimacy in the terms of settlement, war termination brings about a mere cease-fire. So legitimacy provides the key element for moving from war termination to conflict resolution.

The post-Cold War era seems to have ushered in an era where civil (internal) wars are more commonplace than interstate ones. Here, too, the difference matters from the standpoint of war termination and conflict resolution. Civil wars oftentimes require outside intervention and mediation and have, therefore, become associated with a need for military operations other than war (MOOTW). One should note, however, that even a conventional, total war like World War II required elements of “nation-building,” filled with the problems, dilemmas, and contradictions we associate with MOOTW.

Crocker and Hampson say that ethnic conflicts are no more difficult to resolve than others. They do note, however, that most civil wars in the 20th century ended with the victory of one side. Even though negotiating an end to civil wars is difficult, the authors believe that third-party mediation and assistance in the implementation of the peace settlements is crucial because conflict-ridden societies do not possess effective civil

institutions. The authors also note that the third party must remain committed for a long period of time to ensure the implementation of the agreement.

Crocker and Hampson have five general principles for conflict resolution in civil wars:

1. Do not set standards for measuring success excessively high.
2. Defer elections to a time when society is prepared to hold them.
3. Disarm and demobilize the military forces and reintegrate guerrilla factions into a reformed military.
4. Help promote new norms and codes of conduct with an emphasis on the rule of law.
5. Assist with economic and social reconstruction to provide a basis for a lasting peace.

Although military force is most directly related to rule number three, that military force is also necessary to provide a base level of security for rules number two, four, and five.

Requirement 3

Objective 4. Using the Gulf War case study, comprehend the lessons that were learned during the transition from combat operations to cease-fire implementation and the interaction between and the causes and effects of the people and agencies representing the various elements of national power. [JPME Area 1(a)(c), 3(a)(c)(d), 4(a)(b)]

Read:

- *The Generals' War*, Chapter 20 and Epilogue (42 pages)

The Gulf War provides several examples of how the nature of this war affected its termination. *The Generals' War* provides examples of how strategic objectives need to be articulated to the Joint force commander, who is at the operational level of war and who is responsible for posturing the military element of national power in such a position that promotes and ultimately accomplishes the strategic objectives and end state established by the POTUS and the Secretary of Defense. Finally, another great lesson observed in this case study is the timing of when national leaders need to determine war termination end states or objectives.

Lesson Summary

War termination is a difficult task for the warfighter, while conflict resolution is a task that can only be accomplished with the participation of agencies representing the other elements of national power as full and equal partners in the resolution process. War termination and conflict resolution involve military members working with civilian leadership at the highest levels; planning campaigns potentially devoid of strategic war termination end states or objectives, operating in MOOTW situations following cessation

of hostilities involving numerous private volunteer organizations (PVOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and international organizations (IOs); and interacting with a host of other military organizations and governmental agencies. The difficulties and complexities of war termination and conflict resolution, demonstrated throughout this lesson, will serve as immense challenges for future Joint force commanders as well as for future Joint functional and Service component planners. Hopefully, the awareness that this lesson offers will aid students in subsequent assignments, if they ever must plan operations and deal with the nuances presented by war termination and conflict resolution. Even at the MAGTF level, war termination and conflict resolution will affect operations and how Marines deal with former combatants, victims of war, and refugees.

JPME Summary

AREA 1					AREA 2				AREA 3					AREA 4					AREA 5			
A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D
X		X		X					X		X	X	E	X	X			X				