

# Re-Understanding End States

A Monograph

by

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## Abstract

Re-Understanding End States, by MAJ David Benjamin Lafave, 44 pages.

Tactical understanding of the term *end state* can be inadequate and inaccurate when used to describe operational and strategic aims and objectives. These aims are less about ends and specific momentary conditions and more about transitions, building potential and maintaining positions of positive advantage. Therefore, military leaders transitioning from tactical execution to operational and strategic planning must divest themselves of their tactical understanding of end states and adopt a more fluid and transitionally-focused view.

This study conducted a structured, focused comparison of Operation Desert Storm in Iraq from 1990 to 1991, Operation Restore Hope in Somalia from 1992 to 1993, and the Canadian operations in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014. Four research questions were asked of each case relating to national strategic aims, military end states, the adjustments made to both, and if their flexibility led to positions of positive advantage. The case studies showed that there are several interpretations of terminology to describe operational and strategic goals. Furthermore, success came less from flexibly written strategic aims or military end state conditions and more from flexible leadership and transitional planning when creating those aims and end states. The theories and empirical evidence examined supported this monograph's thesis that clear strategic aims combined with flexibly planned military end state conditions will better maintain positions of positive advantage than the use of rigid military end states that are focused on momentary success.

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## Acronyms

ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
AO	Area of Operations
CENTCOM	Central Command
CGSC	Command and General Staff College
FM	Field Manual
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JP	Joint Publication
LOC	Line of Communication
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
SecDef	Secretary of Defense
UN	United Nations
UNITAF	Unified Task Force
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
US	United States
3D	Defense, Diplomacy and Development

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## Introduction

Military commanders begin their careers as tactically-focused lieutenants who receive detailed orders to do specific tasks. It is relatively clear when these tasks are complete. When ordered to dig ten holes, the lieutenant knows he has completed the mission when ten holes are dug. As these officers advance through the ranks, they are given more complex tasks that must be sub-divided, assigned to subordinates and then led to completion. They are taught to use terms like *objectives* and *end state* to describe the goals that must be achieved and to envision what the situation will look like when all is said and done. However, as those officers become operational and strategic planners, the increase in complexity and integration with political goals requires an updated understanding of these concepts.

The problem that this study is trying to solve is that the term *end state* is inadequate and inaccurate when used to describe operational and strategic objectives. These objectives are less about ends and specific momentary conditions and more about transitions, building potential and maintaining positions of positive advantage. Military leaders transitioning from tactical execution to operational and strategic planning must divest themselves of the tactical understanding of end states and adopt a more fluid and transitionally-focused view of military objectives. This includes examining the current meaning of military and national strategic end states, which are sometimes confused with objectives in both understanding and doctrinal definition.

The purpose of this study is to answer the primary research question; to determine if the improper application and understanding of current doctrinal terminology for end states and objectives negatively affect the accomplishment of military goals in support of national strategic interests? End states focus on specific success conditions at a static moment in time and dividing those end states into specific correlated conditions is a well-supported practice to simplify the understanding of goal achievement. However, in an environment of fluctuating political guidance and generally changing situations, it is important to have goals that provide direction for advancement of national interests while remaining adaptable. Therefore, this study proposes that clear strategic aims combined with flexible military end

state conditions will better maintain positions of positive advantage than the use of rigid military end states that are focused on momentary success.

This study is significant for multiple reasons, but primarily because it will increase understanding of the key terms and concepts surrounding end states that are essential for operational and strategic planning. Military professionals must recognize that these terms and concepts are not universally understood to be the same across the tactical, operational and strategic levels. Furthermore, individuals moving from the tactical to the operational level and beyond can begin to understand the inconsistencies in military language and the requirement for clarity. For more senior leaders and planners who have accepted and mastered the uncertainty that exists at the politically complex operational and strategic levels, it can enable debates over the concept of end states which can potentially lead to improved planning of operational and strategic goals. If readers of this study develop and apply an even slightly better understanding of how the language of developing operational and strategic goals affect their actual achievement, the study will have been sufficiently significant. In order to have a beneficial discussion concerning clear language and the effects it has, certain terminology must be defined.

Considering that this study aims to clarify the proper use of certain operational and strategic language, it is important to define the doctrinal terms and vernacular that are required to have an informed discussion. The terms surrounding ends states and objectives are defined below in order to provide a starting point. These definitions are pulled from United States (US) Army doctrine as well as joint publications.

## End States

There are three definitions for end state that are germane to this discussion. The first is the stand-alone definition for end state found in US Army and joint doctrine, which is “the set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander's objectives.”<sup>1</sup> Second, there is the military end

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<sup>1</sup> US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1-02, Terms and Military Symbols* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), 1-34.

state, defined in Army and joint doctrine as “the set of required conditions that defines achievement of all military objectives. It normally represents a point in time and/or circumstances beyond which the President does not require the military instrument of national power as the primary means to achieve remaining national objectives.”<sup>2</sup> Third is the national strategic end state. This term is used in central US Army and joint planning doctrine, such as *Field Manual (FM) 3-0 Operations* and *Joint Publication (JP) 5-0 Joint Planning*, but neither of these documents, nor *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1-02 Terms and Military Symbols* contains a definition of national strategic end state. The *Campaign Planning Handbook* from the US Army War College provides a simple description of the national strategic end state as “the conditions that the President envisions for the region or theater. National strategic end state conditions derive from Presidential or Secretary of Defense (SecDef) guidance that is often vague. Often, senior military leaders will assist the President and SecDef in developing and articulating the end state conditions.”<sup>3</sup> Issues with common understanding and application of terms can often be traced to a lack of definition available to those who use the term.

## Operational and Strategic Objectives

As with the definition of end state, there is a generic military definition for objectives which is then refined for both operational and strategic levels. To begin, an objective must be clearly defined, decisive, and attainable.<sup>4</sup> There are four primary considerations for an objective, which are the following: (1) an objective establishes a single desired result (a goal); (2) an objective should link directly or indirectly to higher level objectives or to the end state; (3) an objective is specific and unambiguous; and

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<sup>2</sup> US Department of Defense, *Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Campaign Planning Handbook* (Carlisle, PA: US Army War College, Department of Military Strategy, 2016), 34.

<sup>4</sup> US Department of Defense, *Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, Joint Operations*, 24.

(4) an objective does not infer ways and/or means—it is not written as a task.<sup>5</sup> The term *operational objective*, much like the term *national strategic end state*, is used throughout Army and joint doctrine, but never succinctly defined. It is simply referred to as the goals established to achieve the military end state. Strategic objectives are defined as the “broadly expressed conditions that should exist after the conclusion of a campaign or operation.”<sup>6</sup> So, objectives are described as being specific and unambiguous at the operational level and broadly expressed at the strategic level, displaying an example of the evolution of a single term as it rises above the tactical level of understanding.

## Hypothesis

This study asserts that the understanding surrounding the language of end states and objectives at the operational and strategic levels affects the execution and subsequent achievement of political goals. Two hypotheses will be used to test the thesis that clear strategic aims combined with flexible military end state conditions will better maintain positions of positive advantage compared to the use of rigid end states that are focused on momentary success. The first hypothesis asserts that when strategic aims are clear, then military end state conditions will be properly established. The second hypothesis suggests that when the military end state conditions are flexible, then they are better able to adjust to the changing strategic and political objectives. This study will test these hypotheses against three case studies by seeking to answer the following questions:

- (1) Were the national strategic aims, end state or objectives properly established and met?
- (2) Was the military end state, with associated conditions, properly established and met?
- (3) Were the national strategic aims or military end state appropriately adjusted during operations?

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<sup>5</sup> US Department of Defense, *Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, Joint Operations*, IV-21.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, IV-9.

- (4) Did flexible military end state conditions lead to maintained positions of positive advantage versus states of positive advantage?

## Limitations and Delimitations

This study had one major limitation, which was a restriction to unclassified information. Due to national security, the strategic and operational end states as well as the objectives described for the scenarios are those that have been released to the public. Classified documents would possibly provide different viewpoints for analyzing this topic.

The scope of the study was restricted in several ways. With regards to the case studies, they were limited to US and Canadian operations in the past 30 years with the intent of maintaining a somewhat contemporary discussion. Next, besides providing contextual background, the case study discussion was focused primarily on end states, conditions, objectives and the ensuing results, presenting little on the effectiveness of the tactical execution unless specifically required. Lastly, this study applied a western nation point of view with US Army doctrine as a baseline. The differences of Canadian and US doctrine were not a focus of this study and the Canadian case study was viewed through a US doctrinal lens.

Assumptions were made in order to scope the discussion and recommendations within a perceived reality. It is assumed that doctrinal change will not arise from this specific study, so discussion and recommendations are then focused on changes in understanding of the concepts within doctrine. In the same vein, political and military leaders will still likely focus on military end states, exit strategies and termination of operations, all of which speak to the idea that government and military officials will continue to want clear and specific criteria for when they can redeploy forces back to American soil. Like the first, this assumption constricts the discussion and recommendations to the perceived realities of the political-military environment.

This study is broken into six sections. Section one, which ends with this paragraph, includes the background, problem statement, purpose of the study, significance of the study, definition of terms,

hypotheses, research questions, limitations, delimitations and assumptions. Section two contains a literature review, providing further understanding of the concepts surrounding the potential differences between transitional and termination-focused end states and objectives at the operational and strategic levels. Section three describes the methodology used in this study, specifically the selection of case studies and their use to answer research questions to support the previously mentioned hypotheses. Section four presents the three case studies and their applicability to the problem. Section five provides the findings and analysis of the case studies against the hypotheses and associated research questions. Section six summarizes the key aspects of the study, comments on the potential implications on doctrine and practice, recommends areas for further research, and states the conclusion of the study.

## Literature Review

This section is the literature review and is broken into three sub-sections of theoretical, conceptual, and empirical. First, the theoretical section provides a framework for discussing end states built from concepts of Clausewitz and operational art. Second, the conceptual section provides further definitions and clarification on the terms that are used in the hypotheses and throughout the rest of the paper. Third, the empirical section discusses what other bodies of work exist on the topic, their associated hypotheses, and whether or not this paper will continue their work or explore a new dimension of the problem. These sections combined provide the background and requisite knowledge to ensure the author and reader have shared understanding of the theoretical framework to be used, the meaning of relevant terminology and the comparative starting point with regards to works of other authors.

### Theoretical

The writings of Prussian general and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz on the relationship between war and politics supports the argument that operational end states must be integrated with political goals and adaptive to political changes. The concept that Clausewitz is most accredited for is that

“war is merely the continuation of policy by other means.”<sup>7</sup> Further, he states that “the political object – the original motive for the war – will thus determine both the military objective to be reached and the amount of effort it requires.”<sup>8</sup> Pulled from his writings in *On War*, these comments speak to his assessment that military objectives, or similarly the operational/military end states, must be based on and aligned with the political goals that the state or nation is trying to achieve. Although he does not specifically mention the development of a “military end state,” he does speak to the requirement for understanding what the end of war looks like, arguing that “no one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it.”<sup>9</sup> With regards to a changing political situation, he does not thoroughly discuss the concept of adjusting military end states. However, it can be interpreted that his theory of war as a continuation of policy would imply that any changes to the politics would then transfer into the planning and conduct of the war’s objectives. Furthermore, it can be argued that he addressed the concepts of transitioning from the military end state to a continuation of political dialogue between belligerent states, as he writes “lastly, even the ultimate outcome of a war is not always to be regarded as final. The defeated state often considers the outcome merely a transitory evil, for which a remedy may still be found in political conditions at some later date.”<sup>10</sup> Just as Clausewitz recognized the defeated state can think of loss as a transitory evil, the opposite could be implied that the war-winning state should consider the military victory as a transitory good that could be undone through political conditions. Clausewitz knew that military end states needed to be clear, aligned with political objectives, adjusted with political change and planned with transition to post-war, political interactions in mind. His thoughts support the thesis of this paper, but whether these ideas are applied and understood by today’s military is

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<sup>7</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 579.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

examined through the historical examples and analysis section. Clausewitz's theories are reflected in the doctrine of today, specifically in regards to operational art and the elements of operational design.

Through the combined application of operational art and design, strategic aims can be used to develop operational objectives and military end states that support those aims. If those aims are clear and the operational design and operational art are applied properly, this would lead to the belief that Clausewitz's theory has been echoed in current US doctrine. *JP 3-0 Joint Operations* defines operational art as:

The cognitive approach by commanders and staffs—supported by their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment—to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means [...] it helps commanders and their staffs organize their thoughts and envision the conditions necessary to accomplish the mission and reach the desired military end state in support of national objectives.<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, the elements of operational design are tools that help the staff further “visualize and describe the broad operational approach to achieve objectives and accomplish the mission.”<sup>12</sup> One of those elements is termination criteria, or the conditions approved by the President or SecDef required for the conclusion of an operation, which are based on the President's strategic objectives.<sup>13</sup> These termination criteria are then used to help define the desired military end state. These concepts of operational art and the termination element of operational design reflect the theory presented by Clausewitz in *On War* – that the military end state, its conditions, and the required objectives are driven from the strategic goals arising from political objectives. With the theories concerning operational art and design covered, the next section will provide the remaining requisite definitions.

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<sup>11</sup> US Department of Defense, *Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), xii.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

## Conceptual

While a couple of doctrinal definitions of end states were provided in the introduction, it is important to continue the discussion here to ensure it is clear what the term does and does not mean depending on context. There are three types of end states depending on context, which are: (1) national strategic end state; (2) military end state and; (3) operational/tactical end state. The definition of each is made clear in the following three paragraphs. It is important to note that the definitions outside of doctrine are few, as these are very militarized terms.

As was mentioned in the introduction, the term “national strategic end state” is used in some of the most central US Army and joint planning doctrine, such as *FM 3-0 Operations* and *JP 5-0 Joint Planning*, but neither of these documents, nor *ADRP 1-02 Terms and Military Symbols* contains a definition. *The Campaign Planning Handbook* from the US Army War College provides a simple description of the national strategic end state as “the conditions that the President envisions for the region or theater. National strategic end state conditions derive from Presidential/SecDef guidance that is often vague. Often, senior military leaders will assist the President and SecDef in developing and articulating the end state conditions.”<sup>14</sup> Official documents such as the *National Security Strategy*, the *Unified Command Plan*, and the *National Military Strategy* will provide direction through enduring national interests, national security interests and national military objectives, including regional direction. These interests and military objectives will be used to determine if the end state conditions for national strategic success are clear and if the subsequent military end states are aligned.

While a clear, doctrinal definition of military end state was provided in the introduction, the differences between an end state, a military end state, objectives and exit strategy require some consideration. An end state, without the preliminary word *military*, is the “required conditions that defines

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<sup>14</sup> *Campaign Planning Handbook*, 34.

achievement of the commander's objectives.”<sup>15</sup> *JP 3-0 Joint Operations* states that the military end state “simply represents the set of conditions necessary to resolve a crisis and transition from predominate use of the military instrument of national power to other instruments.”<sup>16</sup> While both refer to conditions, the military end state should define both success and transition. Objectives, as doctrinally described, must be clearly defined, decisive, attainable, specific and unambiguous. At the tactical level, objectives can fit into this definition. At the operational level, the objectives often become much more ambiguous and less clearly defined as they are more closely aligned with potentially ambiguous strategic or political objectives that are focused on transition, rather than a finite end. Finally, it is important to separate *exit strategy* from end state. The term exit strategy was originally taken from the business world where it meant “planning for disengagement in a way that forestalls future engagement in similar circumstances.”<sup>17</sup> The term was adopted by military and political leaders to represent a plan for logically disengaging and, simply put, remove military forces from a theatre of operations. There are some that would confuse exit strategy and military end state. Despite their potential linkages, however, they are not the same. Exit strategy is focused on the planned withdrawal of forces while military end state is focused on conditions to meet national strategic aims and transition to support other instruments of national power.<sup>18</sup> It must be clear that the term military end state does not specifically refer to any reduction of military forces or operations in and of itself. Military forces often remain and continue operations after the military end state to support the national strategic aims, but they are simply not the lead. This is why it is essential to examine military end state and its application as a term for transition, rather than the related

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<sup>15</sup> US Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 1-02, Terms and Military Symbols*, 1-34.

<sup>16</sup> US Department of Defense, *Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, Joint Operations*, 4.

<sup>17</sup> David J. Bame, *The Exit Strategy Myth and End State Reality* (Quantico, VA: US Marine Corps Command and Staff College, 2001), 10-11.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

tactical definition that focuses on completion of unambiguous objectives. The case studies will investigate the application of transitional and adaptive military end states.

The final concept that must be understood is that of positions of positive advantage. What does it mean when it is said that political objectives are less about ends and more about the potential and maintenance of positions of positive advantage? There is no doctrinal definition of the term, but theorists speak to this as the aim of national strategy. Everett Dolman, an associate professor US Air Force School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, writes in his book *Pure Strategy* that “it is possible to win the war and lose the strategic advantage” and that “strategy, in its simplest form, is a plan for attaining continuing advantage.”<sup>19</sup> However, he never specifically clarifies what a continued advantage is. Military historian J.F.C. Fuller argues that “battles and wars may end, but one can no more achieve final victory than one can ‘win’ history”, thus supporting the concept of maintaining an advantage rather than winning a specific event.<sup>20</sup> The definition that best describes the position of positive advantage comes from Dr. William J. Davis Jr., associate professor with the US Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC). He proposes that the “goal is to reach the position wherein steady-state activities are able to protect and further American interests.”<sup>21</sup> It is a simple definition that can be somewhat quantified by comparing official interests against the steady-state activities of the nation. For this reason, Dr. Davis’ definition of a position of positive advantage will be used when examining the case studies. With the terminology understood, or at least clarified, the existing works of others can be explored.

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<sup>19</sup> Everett C. Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Frank Cass, 2005), 3-6.

<sup>20</sup> J.F.C. Fuller, *The Foundations of the Science of War* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1926), 26.

<sup>21</sup> William J. Davis, “The End of End State: Strategic Planning Process for the 21st Century,” *Inter-Agency Journal* 6, no. 4 (Fall 2015), 18.

## Empirical

This sub-section of the literature review provides a brief overview of some of the existing writings with a view to comparing other previous assertions to the hypotheses of this paper. The first hypothesis states that when strategic aims are clear, then military end state conditions will be properly established. Based on what has been previously mentioned from the writings of Clausewitz and the doctrine of operational art and design, it could be argued that this hypothesis is already supported. However, just because doctrine and theory lean a certain direction does not mean that it is applicable in practical situations. This first hypothesis is similar to assertions made by Major Richard E. Matthews in *Defining the Operational End State: Operation Desert Storm*. Matthews claims that US operations in Iraq in 1990-1991 are an example of well-defined strategic goals that enabled development of a specific military end state. He then discusses US operations in Korea and Vietnam as counter-examples to show the varying degrees of political and military end state alignment.<sup>22</sup> David Bame, of the US State Department, makes a similar, but interestingly different assertion in *The Exit Strategy Myth and the End State Reality*. Using several case studies, he argues that transition planning and clear military statements of end state will ensure unity of effort and foster success in military operations. He goes further to argue that military end states, as necessary elements of military planning and conduct, can help refine strategic and diplomatic end states that sometimes become clouded by changes in circumstance.<sup>23</sup> So both authors agree to the relationship between clear strategic aims leading to the proper establishment of military end state conditions, but the relationship may not be unidirectional.

The second hypothesis suggests that when military end state conditions are flexible, then they are better able to adjust to the changing strategic and political objectives. This speaks to the transitional and adaptive nature that military end states should have. Dr. William J. Davis, author of *The End of End State:*

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<sup>22</sup> Richard Matthews, "Defining the Operational End State: Operation Desert Storm" (Master's thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2007), 29-33.

<sup>23</sup> David J. Bame, *The Exit Strategy Myth and End State Reality*, 44-52.

*Strategic Planning Process for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, proposes using transitional terminology that embraces ambiguity when describing military strategic and operational planning, enabling military action to remain better aligned with the changing world of policy.<sup>24</sup> He claims that most of the strategic and operational lexicon of the US military was born out of the tactical level of warfare and has not evolved to be effective in an environment where military and political operations have to be better-synchronized to maintain the opportunity to protect and further American interests.<sup>25</sup> In *Strategic Realignment: Ends, Ways, and Means in Iraq*, COL Bruce Reider focuses on the issues with an unchanged US strategy in Iraq from 2003 to 2007, despite the fact that the “underlying assumptions have changed in response to changing security and economic conditions, calling into question the likelihood of achieving the desired end state.”<sup>26</sup> He asserts that there is always a need to re-examine and realign the military ends, ways and means to adapt to the changing political situation, supporting the second hypothesis presented in this paper.<sup>27</sup> A third article worth mentioning is *The End State Fallacy*, by Anthony H. Cordesman and Arleigh A. Burke, the Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. They, much like Dr. Davis, believe that end states are not the way to look at a problem, advocating use of transitional and adaptive planning.<sup>28</sup> They state that these plans should recognize the reality that the United States cannot control the future and must be adaptable. They propose that US planning will fail if there is a continued focus on end states and transformational efforts that are not in line with the desires of impacted nations.<sup>29</sup> Instead, the authors repeatedly call for truly integrated civil-military plans that are based on realistic resources and expectations in order to exert sustained influence over time. *The End State Fallacy* presents arguments

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<sup>24</sup> William J. Davis, *The End of End State: Strategic Planning Process for the 21st Century*, 16-17.

<sup>25</sup> William J. Davis, *The End of End State: Strategic Planning Process for the 21st Century*, 17-18.

<sup>26</sup> Bruce J. Reider, “Strategic Realignment: Ends, Ways, and Means in Iraq,” *Parameters* (Winter 2007-08), 49.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>28</sup> Anthony H Cordesman and Arleigh A. Burke, *Grand Strategy in the Afghan, Pakistan and Iraq Wars: The End State Fallacy* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2010), 18-19.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

outside the intended scope of this paper, but this paper's hypotheses correspond with the requirements for transitional, adaptive planning and agrees with the issues of focusing on end states, as well the idea of exerting sustained influence over time, which is synonymous to maintaining a position of positive advantage.

The purpose of this section was to provide the requisite background on theory, terminology and current related works to ensure the author and reader have shared understanding before presenting the actual evidence to support the thesis that clear strategic aims combined with flexible operational objectives will better build potential and maintain positions of positive advantage. This thesis and the two defined hypotheses appear to be supported by the theories of Carl von Clausewitz, the doctrine of operational art, and the writings of several senior military officers and historians. Before moving to an examination of case studies, the methodology section that follows will explain which case studies were chosen and why, as well as how the analysis will be presented.

## Methodology

The purpose of the methodology section is to describe how evidence was examined in order to prove or disprove the hypotheses that support the thesis. The methodology is explained by introducing the overall reasoning behind using case studies, identifying which case studies will be used, specifying what data will be collected through a series of hypotheses-specific questions, and finally how the answers to those questions can be potentially quantified or assessed. It is important to first introduce the overall conceptual methodology that was used to analyze the case studies, which is called structured, focused comparison. The method is structured in that the same set of questions that support the research goals are asked of each case study in order to standardize the analysis and data collection. The method is focused in that it asks questions that are only related to certain aspects of the historical cases to enable analysis of specific research goals without covering every possible discussion of potentially vast historical events.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> A. L. George and A. Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 67.

This method is often adopted to discourage the reliance on single historical analogies when analyzing hypothesis which are not constrained to a distinct historical event or timeframe. Case studies are “widely used as an approach to empirical inquiry that investigates how phenomena unfold within their immediate contexts” and the structured, focused comparison method allows the examination of the phenomena within different contexts to support broader generalizations and theories.<sup>31</sup> This leads to a better understanding of why developments unfolded in certain ways and what might become important to look at more extensively in future research.<sup>32</sup> With the methodology selected, case studies must now be chosen that are relevant to the hypotheses.

Three case studies were chosen to examine military end states. The first case study is Operation Desert Storm, the 1990-1991 invasion of Iraq by coalition forces from thirty-five nations led by the United States in response to Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait. The focus was on US operations and end states. It was believed the case study would be applicable to the research as it is an example of a relatively short war that seemed to have successfully integrated clear strategic aims with clear military end states. The second case study is Operation Restore Hope, which was the 1992-1993, US-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) supporting United Nations Security Council Resolution 794 by creating a protected environment for humanitarian operations in the southern half of Somalia. This case study is applicable due to evidence of both changing strategic aims and military objectives. It provides an example of the issues with disjointed aims and end states and potentially how that affects the potential that was built thereafter. The third case study examines Canadian operations in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014, with specific attention to Operation Athena, which was the Canadian Forces contribution to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from 2003 to 2011. Due to its longer duration, there can be examination of the changes in strategic aims and a comparison to the changes in military end state. The

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<sup>31</sup> John L. Rury, “The Power and Limitations of Historical Case Study: A Consideration of Postwar African American Educational Experience,” *HSE – Social and Education History* 3, no. 3 (October 2014): 242.

<sup>32</sup> A. L. George and A. Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, 76.

case studies present a variety of operations, with Operation Desert Storm being a large-scale combat operation, Operation Restore Hope focusing on humanitarian assistance, and Operation Athena being a more contemporary counter-insurgency operation. The differing types of operations with different strategic aims enables an assessment of the relationship between clear strategic aims and clear military end states, including their flexibility to change.

An essential part of the structured, focused method is to pose the same hypothesis-assessing questions for each case study in order to collect thesis-related data, which in turn enables comparison between the different cases. For the purposes of this study, there are four such questions:

- (1) Were the national strategic aims, end state or objectives properly established and met?
- (2) Was the military end state, with associated conditions, properly established and met?
- (3) Were the national strategic aims or military end state appropriately adjusted during operations?
- (4) Did flexible military end state conditions lead to maintained positions of positive advantage versus states of positive advantage?

It is expected that the first question will not reveal a difference between aims, end states or objectives at the national level, but that the strategic direction will be described as ambiguous aims. As to assessing whether those strategic aims were met, it will be very dependent on how clearly they were defined. It is suspected that that the government either adjusted the strategic aims so that they could be met or massaged the narrative of the operation to make it appear that the resulting conditions corresponded with the original aims. Analyzing the second question will demonstrate whether the military clearly defined the military end state with conditions and if those conditions are supportive of strategic aims. It is believed that terminology will vary in its usage from document to document, resulting in vague end states and conditions. Further, it is expected that those military end states will be somewhat strategically-nested and reflect efforts towards an exit strategy. It is believed the answers to questions three and four will show that while the environments and national strategies may have changed, the military end states will not be clearly redefined. That is to say, even if military operations took a new

direction based on the changing environment, it is not believed that the military end state was redefined and nested under updated strategic aims. Without this clear vision on a new direction, it is predicted that it would then prove difficult to purposefully maintain a position of positive advantage. The data collected by answering these questions will support a discussion on the hypotheses.

It is almost impossible to quantify how much a strategic aim is met or the flexibility of a military end state. Thus, it is important to determine how the collected data will be analyzed prior to collecting it so as not to base the measurements solely on what data is actually found during research. With regards to strategic and military goals, there are two ways to assess the “met” standard. First, there are some instances of quantifiable results or binary results, such as the strategic aim to cause an opposing government to surrender. If that opposing government did surrender, the aim is met. The second method is for more ambiguous goals, such as to emplace a foreign government that will cooperate with our own. The level of cooperation may be difficult to measure, and so the meeting of aims such as this is confirmed or denied by examining government assessments or political-military analysis by non-government agencies/authors. Compiling the analysis will assist in determining whether a goal was met or an adjustment to change was suitable.

A solid methodology is important in maintaining an intelligent approach to properly confirm or deny a hypothesis. When constructing hypotheses related to political-military strategy and military end states, it was clear that a case study approach would be appropriate and the structured, focused comparison would limit the data collection to that which would be useful. While this methodology has merits, it is suspected that quantifiable and measureable data for this somewhat subjective topic may be difficult to find. However, with a plan in place, the three case studies can now be presented.

## Case Studies

This section examines the case studies of Operations Desert Storm, Operation Restore Hope and the Canadian operations in Afghanistan, beginning with their contextual background followed by answering of questions presented in the methodology. The purpose of this section is to provide the data

required to analyze the case studies in order to support or counter the hypotheses. The three cases offer varying situations to compare the potentially different results, beginning with Operation Desert Storm.

## Operation Desert Storm

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, 1990, Saddam Hussein's Iraqi military began an invasion of Kuwait; an invasion fueled by disputes regarding petroleum production and land ownership; Saddam Hussein accused Kuwait of stealing Iraqi petroleum through slant drilling practices, over-producing oil based on Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreements, and disputed territorial claims.<sup>33</sup> Since 1980, the United States had been applying the *Carter Doctrine* to the Persian Gulf, a doctrine created by President Jimmy Carter. The President identified Persian Gulf stability as a national interest in his State of the Union address, asserting that "an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf Region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America. Such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."<sup>34</sup> After the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, President George H.W. Bush brought situational precision to the Carter Doctrine with four clear US national policy objectives: (1) the immediate, complete and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait; (2) restoration of Kuwait's legitimate government to replace the puppet regime; (3) security and stability of Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf; and (4) safety and protection of the lives of American citizens abroad.<sup>35</sup> Only the third objective, the security and stability of Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf, left room for interpretation due to the possible variations in meaning of "security and

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<sup>33</sup> History.com Editors, "Persian Gulf War," History, last modified September 20, 2018, accessed 7 March, 2019, <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-east/persian-gulf-war>.

<sup>34</sup> C-Span, "1980 State of the Union Address," accessed 7 March, 2019, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?124054-1/1980-state-union-address>.

<sup>35</sup> George Bush, Final Report to Congress, "Conduct of the Persian Gulf War, Pursuant to Title V of the Persian Gulf Conflict Supplemental Authorization and Personnel Benefits Act of 1991," Public Law 102-25 (April 1992), 21.

stability.” However, at the time, this was an generally understood concept referring to the maintenance of free flowing oil from the region.<sup>36</sup> The US government decided to employ the military to achieve its national objectives. General Schwarzkopf, Commander-in Chief of Central Command (CENTCOM), developed two CENTCOM policy goals from the national objectives which were the restoration of legitimate government in Kuwait and regional stability. These were also referred to as the CENTCOM’s end states. Schwarzkopf and his staff began with the defense of Saudi Arabia to prevent further aggression by Iraq, which would become the defensive-focused Operation DESERT SHIELD. This operation would not in itself achieve any strategic goals, but was necessary to set conditions for the offensive-focused Operation Desert Storm.

Schwarzkopf’s plan for Operation Desert Storm contained two phases. The first was an air campaign targeting Iraqi command, control, communications, air defense, sustainment, and ground forces. Second, a ground campaign was designed to oust Iraqi forces within Kuwait. Schwarzkopf established military end state conditions beyond the previously mentioned CENTCOM policy goals, namely the control of critical lines of communication (LOC) and the destruction of the Republican Guard.<sup>37</sup> The Republican Guard was Saddam Hussein’s elite force and Schwarzkopf stressed the importance of their destruction as vital to achieving regional stability. The United States saw tremendous success in both its air and land operations, accomplishing the most military-centric national strategic objective of Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait within the first four days of the ground campaign. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of February, 1991, General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, informed Schwarzkopf that the President was considering ending the war, not wanting to cause more death and destruction than was necessary to achieve US strategic goals.<sup>38</sup> However, the military end state condition of destroying the Republican Guard had not been achieved at this time. Understanding the military’s role in supporting the

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<sup>36</sup> Richard Matthews, “Defining the Operational End State: Operation Desert Storm”, 19.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

national aims, General Schwarzkopf did not allow his concerns for accomplishing his preliminary military end state to prevent him from adapting to the changing situation and political assessment. Orders were quickly changed to set conditions for a cease fire, which would begin the following day. Schwarzkopf and his staff then began a new task of defining what the end of the war would now look like; arguably a new set of end state conditions. However, political leaders provided little written direction and “the untidy end to the conflict showed that it is not enough to plan a war. Civilian and military officials must also plan for the peace that follows.”<sup>39</sup> That being said, Operation Desert Storm is considered a successful military action, the US-led coalition having achieved victory over the world’s fourth largest army in 44 days of joint combat operations.<sup>40</sup> Further, it is often regarded as one of the few examples where political direction included clear aims, which leads into the first hypothesis-focused question.

The first hypotheses-related question is if the national strategic aims, end states and objectives were properly established and met and the answer is yes. The four US national policy objectives established by President Bush were all achieved through US-led coalition military action and then political negotiation. It is important to note that military action was halted to prevent further deterioration of the Iraqi government, which would have likely hindered stabilization of the region.

The second question is whether the military end state with associated conditions and objectives was properly established and met, to which the answer is yes and no. General Schwarzkopf established CENTCOM military end state conditions as the destruction of the Republican Guard and control of key LOCs. These were broken into tactical objectives for the air and ground campaigns which led to military end state conditions. Therefore, a clear military end state and supporting objectives were certainly established, but as was previously mentioned, not entirely met due to the changing political situation. While air supremacy had been achieved and key enemy LOCs were controlled, the destruction of the enemy armor forces within the Republican Guard had not been accomplished. This was an objective of

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<sup>39</sup> Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals’ War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1995), 464.

<sup>40</sup> Richard Matthews, “Defining the Operational End State: Operation Desert Storm”, 24.

the ground force and part of the conditions for the military end state. However, adjusting a military end state was arguably the appropriate action, as seen in the answer to the next question.

The third question to consider is whether or not the national strategic aims or military end state were appropriately adjusted during operations? First, the national strategic aims were not adjusted during the operations. However, when the mission saw rapid success involving large destruction of Iraqi forces, the President and General Powell recognized the potential for military actions to negatively affect accomplishment of the goal of regional stability. Furthermore, the notions of maintaining coalition strength, building US honor and removing any remaining stain of Vietnam became unwritten national interests that affected the decision to end the war prior to accomplishment of the military end state.<sup>41</sup> Although these were not official changes to the national strategic aims, they were changes to the strategic situation and, therefore, the timely adjustment of the military end state by General Schwarzkopf was certainly appropriate to ensure success of the strategic aims.

The final question to answer is if flexible military end state conditions lead to maintained positions of positive advantage versus states of positive advantage? In examining the military end state conditions, they do not appear flexible in the slightest. They were clear conditions that General Schwarzkopf wanted accomplished in order to support strategic aims. When the early cease-fire option arose and political leaders provided little guidance on the new strategic end state conditions for the post-war Iraq, Schwarzkopf modified his current conditions and created a new military end state. It was Schwarzkopf's flexibility that led to a position of positive advantage by supporting national strategic aims and providing stability to the region for the foreseeable future.

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<sup>41</sup> Richard Matthews, "Defining the Operational End State: Operation Desert Storm", 26.

## Operation Restore Hope

The country of Somalia has been in various states of civil war since the mid-1980s, but after the overthrow of the Barre government in 1991, there was a significant rise in violence as various armed factions competed for influence and power within the nation. The large increase in fighting combined with a regional drought created a situation where over half of the 10 million citizens were in danger of starvation or malnutrition-related disease.<sup>42</sup> Approximately three hundred thousand died in the early months of 1992 and over 3 million fled the country as refugees.<sup>43</sup> The United Nations Operation in Somalia I (UNOSOM I) began in April 1992 with the political goals of providing humanitarian relief and establishing a cease-fire. Despite the cease-fire being signed, factions all across the country ignored it and the violence and suffering continued to escalate. The 500 strong UNOSOM I forces could not complete its military end state of supporting humanitarian relief by securing delivery points and access against this level of violent opposition. The assessment that more forces were needed compelled the creation of the US-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) in December 1992, codenamed Operation Restore Hope.<sup>44</sup>

The forces of 24 countries were charged with carrying out United Nations Security Council Resolution 794, creating a protected environment for conducting humanitarian operations in the southern half of the country.<sup>45</sup> The United States committed 28,000 soldiers, dwarfing the 500 Pakistani soldiers that had been securing the Area of Operation (AO) under UNOSOM I.<sup>46</sup> Prior to the actual deployment of US forces, the political objectives remained the same and the US military end state, while still focused on security and stabilization, had politically-based restraints of obtaining that secure environment with a

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<sup>42</sup> “UNOSOM I”, last modified 10 January, 2007, accessed 7 March, 2019, [http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co\\_mission/unosom1backgr2.html](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/co_mission/unosom1backgr2.html).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> David J. Bame, *The Exit Strategy Myth and End State Reality*, 30.

<sup>45</sup> United Nations, *Security Council Resolution S/RES/794 (1992)*, The rule of law at the national and international levels, S/RES/794 (3 December 1992), [UNdocs.org/S/RES/794](http://undocs.org/S/RES/794).

<sup>46</sup> Robert G. Patman, *The U.N. Operation in Somalia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), 92.

minimal use of force in as short a time as possible. In mid-December 1992, almost immediately after the arrival of the US UNITAF forces, Assistant Secretary of State Herman Cohen announced an amendment to the national objectives in Somalia, stating that the US efforts would be for nothing if they didn't "follow through on the long and difficult process of reconstituting Somalia's civil society and government."<sup>47</sup> However, the US government remained focused on their exit strategy given that the US forces and their previously established military end state remained unchanged. The UN had always planned on establishing UNOSOM II, a UN operation that was meant to carry on post-UNITAF, and the US government pushed for this UN mission to be tasked with re-establishing Somalian governance. The UN agreed to this transition, but argued that it could not be done without the continued support of US forces. The United States agreed to support UNOSOM II, but nevertheless drew down from approximately 25,000 soldiers to 5000 in the transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II in May 1993.<sup>48</sup> The national objectives were now the combined goals of security to prevent humanitarian crisis and the reconstruction of Somalian governance, but the military end state did not change from obtaining the secure environment with a minimal use of force in as short a time as possible. The United States now planned to complete two national objectives, where before there was only one, using one fifth the force. Once the United States had withdrawn the majority of its forces, the regional factions escalated their attacks against each other and the UNOSOM forces. Lack of perceived progress and the deaths of several US soldiers caused their complete withdrawal in March 1994 and the end of the UNOSOM mission a year later.<sup>49</sup> Now that the situation has been well-established, the hypotheses-focused questions can be clearly answered.

The first question to support the hypotheses is if the national strategic aims, end states and objectives were properly established and met. During UNOSOM I and in the planning of UNITAF, the

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<sup>47</sup> David J. Bame, *The Exit Strategy Myth and End State Reality*, 32.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

UN strategic aims were providing humanitarian relief and a cease-fire. Although humanitarian relief was provided and a cease-fire was established, the relief did not meet the intent of preventing famine and the cease-fire, despite being signed, was neither followed nor enforced. Therefore, it can be argued that the UNOSOM strategic level objectives were established, but not met. When the United States truly engaged the situation with Operation Restore Hope, the national strategic aims were already aligned with the UN aims of creating a protected environment for conducting humanitarian operations in the southern half of the country and preventing famine. Then, the additional national aim of restoring the civil governance of Somalia was established. A protected environment was temporarily created during the UNITAF mission, but upon the withdrawal of the US forces when UNITAF transitioned to UNOSOM II, this security was lost. Further, the civil governance task was fully passed along to the UNOSOM effort as well, which also reached minimal success. So, the US national goals during UNITAF and UNOSOM II were also established, but not met.

The second question is whether the military end state with associated conditions and objectives was properly established and met. The military end state for UNOSOM I was to support humanitarian relief by securing delivery points and access, which was obviously not met as this failure was the very reason UNITAF was created. The military end state for UNITAF was providing enough security for humanitarian assistance efforts to prevent or end the ongoing famine and to do this with a minimal use of force in as short a time as possible. During the UNITAF mission, this was met, but upon transition to the UNOSOM II mission, security failed and stabilization efforts were affected in kind. Therefore, the overall military end state was not achieved when viewing the entirety of the situation. The United States did achieve the exit strategy it desired, but this cannot be confused with a successfully met military end state.

The third question to consider is whether or not the national strategic aims or military end state were appropriately adjusted during operations. The national strategic aim of providing humanitarian relief and establishing a cease-fire remained throughout the varying operations and the goal of reconstituting the civil governance was added just after the beginning of the UNITAFs mission. This was an appropriate adjustment as it was based on a more holistic assessment of the situation, acknowledging that security

alone would not achieve the desired results. The military end state, however, was not appropriately adjusted along with the national strategic aims. It remained focused on providing the minimum support to humanitarian assistance and was not reassessed for the actual requirements associated with the stabilization of Somalian governance. It could also be argued that the military end state had been replaced by an exit strategy, a strategy that was only slightly adjusted to maintain the 5000 soldiers that the United States had committed to UNOSOM II. Then, when UNOSOM II became too costly and politically damaging, the United States once again amended the exit strategy and abandoned any notion of meeting their original military end state conditions.

The final question to answer is if flexible military end state conditions lead to maintained positions of positive advantage versus states of positive advantage. The military end state was to have secured delivery points and access to support humanitarian assistance operations to prevent or reduce the famine, which is clear enough to execute while being vague enough to allow for changing conditions. Just the words *preventing famine* could allow for modifications in the location where operations are taking place within the country to reduce famine, or what level of Somalian capability is needed prior to US forces withdrawal. Also, the end state could be interpreted to allow for slow drawdowns of forces and slow, deliberate transitions to prevent famine. At the same time, once measures defining famine prevention were established, the end state could still provide enough guidance to be used for planning objectives that would enable proper transitions at the right times and places throughout the country. Not accounting for the fact that the military end state did not appropriately adjust for the changing national aims, the stated military end state appears to have been left vague enough to provide the appearance of flexibility. The issues of vagueness in writing, lack of adjustment and the focus on exit strategy will be discussed further in the analysis section.

## Canadian Operations in Afghanistan

2,977 people were killed in the 11<sup>th</sup> of September, 2001, terrorist attack on the United States, including twenty-four Canadians. Many Canadians felt their security and safety was as threatened as the citizens of the United States.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) invoked the collective defense Article 5 of the Washington Treaty for the first time in its history, Canada willingly contributed forces to the UN-sanctioned, NATO-led mission in Afghanistan. The mission was initially focused on preventing the perpetrators of the 9/11 attack, namely Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda, from operating with impunity from within Afghanistan under the Taliban regime.<sup>51</sup>

There were many named Canadian operations that covered varying contributions by the Government of Canada. However, three operations that span the entirety of Canadian participation in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014 will be used to examine the changing strategic and military strategies. The first is Operation Apollo from October 2001 to October 2003, which saw Canadian special forces fighting alongside Americans as early as one month after the 9/11 attack, as well as the country's largest naval commitment since World War II.<sup>52</sup> The second is Operation Athena from August 2003 to December 2011, which was Canada's contribution to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). This operation started in the vicinity of the capital, Kabul, helping to establish and enhance security. In 2006, the Canadian task force moved to the Kandahar province where it conducted both combat and training operations until December 2011. At that time, the main combat forces of the Canadian military began redeployment to Canada and there was a transition to Operation Attention. This last Canadian operation in Afghanistan delivered training and professional development support to the national security forces of Afghanistan, specifically the Afghan National Army, the Afghan Air Force, and the Afghan National Police. The Canadian Armed Forces trained Afghan Kandaks (battalion sized units) and provided

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<sup>50</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan: Fourteenth and Final Report* (Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication, 2012), 3.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, Foreword.

<sup>52</sup> *History of Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan 2001–2014*, last modified 19 June, 2014, accessed 7 March, 2019, <https://www.international.gc.ca/afghanistan/history-histoire.aspx?lang=eng>.

specialized training in fields such as medicine, logistics, signals and air operations.<sup>53</sup> On the 14<sup>th</sup> of March, 2014, the last Canadian Armed Forces members redeploying from Afghanistan were welcomed home in their capital of Ottawa.<sup>54</sup> Answering the hypotheses-based questions can now add the specific details required to enable assessment of this case study.

As seen with the previous two case studies, the first question to answer is if the national strategic aims, end states or objectives were properly established and met. To answer the question properly, the timeframe from 2001 to 2014 must not only be broken into the different named operations, but also Operation Athena must be broken into pre-2008 and post-2008. It was in 2008 that the Government of Canada adopted a more strategically directed methodology that attempted to improve the effective integration all aspects of Canadian national power to accomplish established goals, which was referred to as a whole-of-government approach. When Canada first deployed soldiers in 2001 as part of Operation Apollo, there were no specific strategic aims in Afghanistan and the forces were committed under the American Operation Enduring Freedom. The Canadian government supported NATO in its application of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty and Canada was enveloped into the strategy development by the United States. When the ISAF began its mission in 2003, Canada shifted its contribution of forces to this task under Operation Athena. However, it once again did not develop national strategic aims beyond those of the UN, and worked within the UN mandate while applying an approach to rebuild the country known as 3D: Defense, Diplomacy and Development. However, in 2007, the Government of Canada commissioned an independent panel to examine Canada's mission in Afghanistan and to make recommendations on the future of Canada's role within the country. In 2008, the resulting Manley Report was released, detailing a whole-of-government approach with focused priorities, clear benchmarks, and a reporting system to ensure transparency and understanding of the progress towards these goals. While the terms national strategic aims and end state weren't specifically used, overall objectives were established

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<sup>53</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan: Fourteenth and Final Report*, 40.

<sup>54</sup> *History of Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan 2001–2014*.

including measures of performance and timelines. The objectives collectively aimed at redeploying combat forces in 2011 and transitioning into a training operation named Operation Attention. The timeline had been set for the 2011 transition due to Canada having signed the NATO Afghan Compact at the London conference in 2006, which agreed to a five-year commitment. Political tensions in Canada in 2009 also pushed Prime Minister Stephen Harper to firmly set 2011 as the transition and withdrawal goal for combat forces. In reassessing Canada's strategic effects in 2008, the government announced a framework of six policy priorities for Afghanistan. The first four were focused primarily on Kandahar province, which were the following:

- (1) Enable the Afghan National Security Forces in Kandahar to sustain a more secure environment and promote law and order.
- (2) Strengthen Afghan institutional capacity to deliver core services and promote economic growth, enhancing the confidence of Kandaharis in their government.
- (3) Provide humanitarian assistance for extremely vulnerable people, including refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons.
- (4) Enhance border security, with facilitation of bilateral dialogue between Afghan and Pakistani authorities.

Two priorities at the national level were supportive of the Kandahar priorities, which were:

- (5) Help advance Afghanistan's capacity for democratic governance by contributing to effective, accountable public institutions and electoral processes.
- (6) Facilitate Afghan-led efforts toward political reconciliation.<sup>55</sup>

The benchmarks or objectives to support these strategic aims were very specific and were not divided into military or civilian agency goals, but specifically stated overall Government of Canada objectives. A couple of examples from the report are shown in Table 1.

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<sup>55</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan: Fourteenth and Final Report*, 4-5.

Table 1. Examples of Canadian whole-of-government approach objectives.

<b>Benchmark</b>	<b>Progress Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>2011 Target</b>
Increase and/or maintain the effective strength (troops trained, ready and available for operations) of Kandahar-based ANA kandaks and their brigade headquarters.	The effective strength of the Kandahar-based ANA kandaks (and their brigade headquarters).	One of the five ANA kandaks has an effective strength of 67% and the remainder currently have an effective strength of over 80%. The ANA brigade headquarters has an effective strength of 77% (June 2008).	To sustain the level of effective strength of the Kandahar-based ANA kandaks (and their brigade headquarters) at 70% or higher.
Improved justice sector: a working court system in Kandahar City with competent judges, prosecutors, defense lawyers and administrative personnel in place.	The number of training programs in place for justice officials in Kandahar.	There are no current training programs for justice officials in Kandahar (August 2008).	Four training programs for justice officials in Kandahar are made available for those practicing law and those involved in administering the legal system.

Source: Data from Government of Canada, *Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan: Fourteenth and Final Report*, 40.

Finally, as to whether or not the strategic aims were met by the Government of Canada, there is not a simple answer. There were 44 benchmark objectives created and 33 were fully achieved with five others being almost completed to the desired level.<sup>56</sup> It was accepted by the Government of Canada that six objectives would not be fully completed prior to the Canadian redeployment of combat forces and transition to Operation Attention. If this were a grade on a test, a 38/44 is a passing 86 percent and the positive messaging in the final report on Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan certainly indicates a successful outcome to the nation's efforts. So, despite a lack of independent strategic vision in the early years of Afghanistan, Canada did have established strategic aims and objectives with an end state focused on a 2011 redeployment of combat forces and the objectives were, for the most part, met.

<sup>56</sup> Government of Canada, *Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan: Fourteenth and Final Report*, 40-56.

The second question to answer is whether the military end state or objectives, with associated conditions, was properly established and met. The military objectives and end state of the Canadian Armed Forces, seem to have followed the same trend as the national strategic aims, in that they took on the US and UN objectives pre-2008 and became more clearly Canadian and conditions-based after the Manley Report. During Operation Apollo, Canadian special forces supported US special forces and the Canadian naval forces supported US naval blockades. Operations to expel Taliban forces from their major strongholds, such as Kandahar Airfield, were successful, as were the naval blockades and searches. So, Operation Apollo's objectives, although loosely defined from the Canadian military point of view, were met. This was the same case with Operation Athena and ISAF's broadly defined military mandate to maintain security in and around Kabul so employees of the Afghan Interim Government and the United Nations could operate in a secure environment.<sup>57</sup> The Canadian Armed Forces contributed to the ISAF contingent and conducted security operations surrounding the cities of Kabul and Kandahar, based on ISAF threat assessments and government activities, such as provincial and national elections. However, no long term military end state was established and objectives were not focused on a long term military end state, but rather in response to ISAF's changing regional security priorities. An example of this was how the ISAF focus on securing the Kandahar province and its central district of Panjwayi changed the Canadian military objectives from patrolling-based security operations in Kabul to more offensive-based operations in Kandahar. This included Operation MEDUSA, an attempt to remove the Taliban from Panjwayi in the most significant land battle undertaken by NATO at the time.<sup>58</sup> So, it is clear that some military objectives were established based on countering Taliban actions and with a generic goal of providing regional security, but the connection to a larger military end state beyond the concept of providing a "secure environment" was difficult to find. It wasn't until 2008 with the release of the Manley Report and the corresponding direction from the Government of Canada that the military was given

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<sup>57</sup> *History of Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan 2001–2014*.

<sup>58</sup> Gasparotto, Mark, *Clearing the Way: Combat Engineers in Kandahar* (Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication, 2010), 1-23.

objectives for 2011, as well as the conditions to meet them. As previously mentioned, they were intertwined and integrated with a whole-of-government approach with examples as per Table 1. To summarize, while there was no clear military end state pre-2008, broad military objectives focused on meeting regional security goals to support government growth had been established and met. After 2008, the whole-of-government direction established an integrated diplomatic, economic and military end state with integrated objectives and conditions. Seven of the forty-four Canadian objectives were almost entirely military centric, such as the training of Kandaks, with five of the seven objectives being fully completed and two being nearly completed. With five of seven objectives completed, coupled with military security enabling the success of other Government of Canada goals, it can be argued that the military end state and objectives were both established and met. However, in the later analysis, the discussion will consider whether this was a true military end state or if Canada was focused on an exit strategy.

The third question to respond to is if the national strategic aims or military end state were appropriately adjusted during operations. The first potential adjustment came in the transition from Operation Apollo to Operation Athena. The national strategic aims were not truly established for Canada beyond supporting the United States under NATO Article 5 and then supporting the UN ISAF mission. In both cases, neither a defined military end state nor possible exit strategy had been publically discussed. Therefore, despite the transition from special forces and offensive action during Operation Apollo to the patrolling and security-focused beginnings of Operation Athena, these changes came from alignments with the US and UN rather than redefined Canadian strategic aims or military end state. The true and appropriate adjustment to both national strategic aims and military end state came with the release of the Manley Report and subsequent government commitments. It would appear that the strategy changed from supporting NATO, to generally improving Afghanistan with a 3D approach to a Canadian specific plan for how to improve Afghanistan up to 2011 in accordance with an exit strategy to withdraw from Afghanistan. Again, the question that will be further discussed in the analysis section is whether the

objectives from the Manley Report are then considered actual end state conditions if Canada began redeployment of forces while objectives remained uncompleted.

The final question to consider is if flexible military end state conditions lead to maintained positions of positive advantage versus states of positive advantage. In the case of the very well-defined, whole-of-government objectives, it seems that the end state conditions were less flexible than the government's willingness to find partial goal completion acceptable. The objectives, as shown in Table 1, had clear success criteria. However, for objectives that were not met, the Government of Canada discussed to what percentage they were achieved and agreed that those partial successes were good enough. So, while clear objectives were established, they were perhaps less conditions for an end state, but desired goals prior to executing an exit strategy for the majority of forces in 2011 and the rest in 2014. However, the objectives were focused on preparing Afghanistan for the Canadian departure, with an emphasis on training regional forces and promoting good governance to achieve regional stability. Therefore, this is interpreted as preparing for a position of positive advantage after Canadian departure, with the steady state operations being conducted by the Afghanistan people with Canadian training support.

In summary, the three case studies have provided interesting vantage points to examine the national strategic end states and supposedly corresponding military end states. There are fascinating variations between the studies and the answers to the hypotheses-based questions which will be discussed within the following findings and analysis section.

## Findings and Analysis

The findings and analysis section will review the information found within the case studies. As was discussed in the methodology section, the hypotheses-focused questions will now be individually examined and their answers compared across the three cases. With the findings compared, analysis will determine if the hypotheses have been supported or not and any noteworthy observations will be presented.

## Findings

The first question is if the national strategic aims, end state or objectives were properly established and met. Three things were expected. First, seeing that the political realm does not hold to the same doctrinal definitions as the military, there would be confusion and interchangeable use of the terms aim, end state and objectives. This appears to be true, as Operation Desert Storm had US national policy objectives, Operation Restore Hope had national strategic aims and Operation Athena had a whole-of-government approach with focused priorities, including objectives and benchmarks. Second, it was expected that the aims would be established, but that there would be varying degrees of clarity and specificity; this was true. The case for Operation Desert Storm had its four clear policy objectives that could be used for the development of a military end state and, once the Manley Report was released, the Canadian case study not only had clear objectives, but ones that were already integrated with the military at the strategic and operational level. Operation Restore Hope did have established national strategic aims, but they were not as specific as in the other two cases. For example, it is clear when Iraqi forces have withdrawn from Kuwait in Desert Storm, but less so when assessing security support to humanitarian assistance, as in Restore Hope. This leads to the third expectation; that strategic aims would be written too vague to specifically define success and would leave room for governments to interpret their actual achievements as success. The US government was able to declare convincing success in Operation Desert Storm once its clearly defined national policy objectives were achieved. However, in Operation Restore Hope, the United States allowed its focus on exit strategy to prevent accomplishment of its stated national strategic aims of governance restoration and famine prevention in Somalia. Canada's whole-of-government objectives were met to a very high percentage. However, as the lack of objective completion did not prevent redeployment of the forces, it would appear that those objectives were always secondary to the primary focus of exit strategy. The question for another study is whether the Canadian government limited the scope of their whole-of-government objectives to fit within a pre-determined exit strategy

rather than creating objectives to achieve national interests. Overall, it would seem that national strategic aims, end states or objectives were established and have varying degrees of specificity. Furthermore, whether they were met or not was based on the governments final interpretation of their own goals. It is also clear that exit strategy can be a condition that interferes with both the formation and completion of national strategic aims, unless withdrawal itself is the primary national aim.

The second question is if the military end state, with associated conditions, was properly established and met. It was expected that a military end state would be established, although it may not be based on the US military definition of “transition to other instruments of national power”. Furthermore, it was expected that the military end state was likely to be more of an exit strategy that was not actually linked to the stated national strategic aims. Operation Desert Storm’s military end state conditions were the destruction of the Republican Guard and the control of key LOCs, which were not entirely met due to the changing political situation. However, this was also a case of a military end state focused on both transition and national strategic aims and not based primarily on exit strategy. On the other end of the spectrum, Operation Restore Hope’s military end state was clearly overrun by exit strategy execution to the point of operational failure. Further, neither the military end state nor the means applied were adjusted to meet the new objective of Somalian governance reconstruction. Exit strategy was met at the expense of mission success. With regards to Canadian operations, the military end state was integrated with the overall objectives at the strategic and operational levels and were met to a high percentage. However, success in accomplishing objectives may be due to the possible limitations set on those objectives and benchmarks due to a superseding exit strategy in line with political pressures and the Afghan Compact. Therefore, in all three scenarios, military end states were established and defined in relatively specific terms, but not all were met. Some conditions were not met due to appropriate adjustments to the changing situation, such as in Desert Storm. Some were not met due to a lack of application of appropriate means or a focus on exit strategy, such as Restore Hope. Inversely, some military end states appeared to be met based on the government’s willingness to accept partial goal completion as being subordinate to exit strategy execution, as with Athena. This indicates that while there is certainly a connection between

properly communicated military end states and meeting objectives, either a focus on exit strategy or an improper application of suitable means can greatly interfere with achievement of end state conditions.

The third question is if the national strategic aims or military end state were appropriately adjusted during operations. It was expected that national strategic aims would be appropriately adjusted, but that military end states would remain constant, leading to divergence in efforts. Interestingly, this was not the case with Operation Desert Storm. While the four national policy objectives did not change, the political situation surrounding them did and General Schwarzkopf successfully amended the military end state to match. However, the expected results did occur with Operation Restore Hope, where the national strategic aims were appropriately adjusted for a requirement for governance restoration, but neither the military end state nor the forces required to support the new aim were modified. Furthermore, as mentioned several times, the exit strategy overcame the end state and the mission. In Operation Athena, both the national strategic aims and military end state were both adjusted from general support of NATO and UN actions under a 3D approach to a fully Canadian-constructed plan consisting of whole-of-government objectives directing political and military goals. However, with this arguably appropriate move came a potentially improper simultaneous development of exit strategy that countered the very use of those objectives as the conditions for mission completion. Therefore, the question has mixed results with Operation Desert Storm amendments being well executed, Operation Restore Hope experiencing the expected divergence of strategic aims and military end state, and the Canadian operations adjusting at both strategic and operational levels, but potentially while departing from an end state and focusing on exit strategy.

The fourth and final question is if flexible military end state conditions lead to maintained positions of positive advantage versus states of positive advantage. As a reminder, Dr. William J. Davis Jr.'s stated that a position of positive advantage was reached when steady-state activities were able to protect and further national interests, whereas a state of positive advantage was fleeting and momentary. It was expected that the military end states would not be flexible and that they would not end in transition to interest-focused, steady-state activities. In Operation Desert Storm, it was General Schwarzkopf's

leadership that enabled amendments to inflexible military end state conditions in order to accomplish strategic aims, which were focused on transition to Iraqi governance, regional stability, and an arguable position of positive advantage. The military end state for Operation Restore Hope was initially vague enough to allow for flexibility, but the lack of alteration in both end state and means to accomplish it in order to meet evolving strategic aims led to a momentary state of positive advantage at the end of the UNITAF mission. This state deteriorated immediately following the transition to UNOSOM II. With regard to the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan, the military end state may have been influenced by a politically driven exit strategy, but the objectives were nonetheless attempting to establish a position of positive advantage by emphasizing the training of Afghan forces to maintain the steady state of regional stability. However, the Canadian forces redeployed in accordance to the exit strategy with some objectives unmet and regional stability questionable. Furthermore, the end state conditions in themselves were not flexible, but rather it was the Canadian government's willingness to accept partial completion of objectives that enabled adjustment to the military end state to accomplish its exit strategy. To summarize, military end states of the case studies only seemed to be flexible when written in a vague manner and, in the only case where this was true, Restore Hope, it did not lead to a position of positive advantage. Both Desert Storm and the Canadian Afghan missions had inflexibly written military end states, but achieved greater success towards positions of positive advantage. The original hypotheses should now explain these results or determine where further examination is required.

## Analysis

This study asserts that clear strategic aims combined with flexible military end state conditions will better maintain positions of positive advantage than the use of rigid military end states that are focused on momentary success. The findings will now be used to discuss whether the two hypotheses are supported, unsupported or have mixed results, followed by considerations that arose during the study and how they affect the thesis.

The first hypothesis asserts that when strategic aims are clear, then military end state conditions will be properly established. The findings generally support this assessment. National policy objectives were very clear for Operation Desert Storm, enabling equally clear military end state conditions that led to success. The national strategic aims for Operation Restore Hope were clear enough to establish a military end state, but the opposing focus on exit strategy as a strategic aim led to a misaligned military end state. This also supports the hypothesis in that the unclear or conflicting strategic direction to withdraw forces while increasing aims led to an improperly established military end state. Finally, the Canadian Forces operations in Afghanistan provides further support to the hypothesis in that the clear strategic and operational direction provided in 2008 coincided with well-established military end states conditions. Therefore, all three case studies support the first hypothesis.

The second hypothesis suggests that when the military end state conditions are flexible, then they are better able to adjust with the changing strategic and political objectives. The findings provide mixed support for this hypothesis. The first problem found with the hypothesis is that the term “flexibility” was earlier alleged to come from the transitional and adaptive nature that military end states should have. However, it was found that this meaning for flexible end states can be interpreted in two ways: the way end states are written and the way end states are planned. The military end state conditions for Operation Desert Storm, to destroy the Republican Guard and control LOCs, do not contain terms of transition or adaption. However, those end states were developed, and more importantly modified, with the intent of transitioning towards regional stability. It was less the terminology used and rather the leadership and planning of General Schwarzkopf and his staff that enabled the transitional and adaptive nature of the operation’s completion. In Operation Restore Hope, it was found that vagueness in writing could appear to allow flexibility in action, but if the military end state was not properly planned for transition or adaption to new strategic objectives, then there was divergence of effort and eventual failure. While the Canadian whole-of-government objectives were not created based on US doctrine, their integration of political, civil and military objectives is in agreeance with Cordesman and Burke’s concepts of truly integrated civil-military plans that are based on realistic resources and expectations to achieve the best

basis for exerting sustained influence over time. Diplomatic and military objectives will then be modified in an integrated fashion when either are adapted to a changing situation. Based on these findings and the literature review, the second hypothesis has mixed support and should be modified to propose that when the military end state conditions are *planned with flexibility in mind*, then they are better able to adjust with the changing strategic and political objectives. The flexibility comes from leadership that planned for transition and is prepared to modify military end state conditions, such as with General Schwarzkopf. Flexibility may also come from integrated civil-military plans that are focused on transition throughout, like that of the Canadian Forces in Afghanistan.

Before concluding with an assessment of the thesis statement, there are three noteworthy considerations regarding these findings and potential future study. First, the effects of specific leaders and their capabilities was not a focus of this study, but became a factor in the discussion. Leadership either plans or approves military end states and a commander's ability to move beyond the tactical understanding of terminology and become more transitionally minded will greatly impact the achievement of positions of positive advantage. Second, duration potentially changes the amount of adaptation or flexibility required, as well as how many changes in leadership may occur. The joint combat operations in Iraq lasted 44 days, the United States was in Somalia for almost two years and Canada was in Afghanistan for 13 years. With longer duration of operations, it is more likely that changes to political situations, enemy conditions and the overall environment will arise. New leadership and shifting public support can also cause exit strategy to rise in priority as a national aim. However, it is interesting that Operation Desert Storm was the shortest case studied and it still had modifications to both the political situation and military end state conditions. The third point is regarding the concept of a "position of positive advantage" and the argument that its achievement involves steady state operations that continue to support national interests. Steady state operations for the case studies were tied to the redeployment of major combat forces and a transition to non-US/Canadian military powers. However, a couple of pertinent questions are: (1) What is the duration of combat operations before they are considered part of the steady state? (2) If operations with undefined end states are achieving national interests, should they be accepted

as part of the steady-state? These three considerations of specific leadership capabilities, duration of operations and the understanding of steady-state and how that affects the planning for positions of positive advantage are all topics that require further research to compliment what was found during this study.

In summary, the first hypothesis is generally supported and the second had mixed results. The findings provide overall support to the thesis, but suggests a slight modification to state that clear strategic aims combined with *flexibly planned* military end state conditions will better maintain positions of positive advantage than the use of rigid military end states that are focused on momentary success. Even if a military end state is well defined, there must be reassessment of goals, a willingness to adapt, and planning must be focused on transitions to steady-state operations that will continue to support national strategic aims.

## Conclusion

This paper reviewed hypothesis-related literature, offered a deliberate methodology for research and comparison, presented three case studies, and analyzed the findings regarding strategic aims and military end states. The literature review considered the theories of Carl von Clausewitz, the doctrine of operational art, and the writings of several senior military officers and historians. This literature not only supported the hypotheses, but provided the background and chosen definitions to terms like “end state flexibility” and “positions of positive advantage.” The method of structured, focused comparison was then introduced to the reader so they could follow the concept of asking the same questions of each case study in order to collect data that could be compared between the varying circumstances. Those varying circumstances included a few-week combat operation in Iraq, a two-year humanitarian assistance operation in Somalia and a 13-year combat and governance assistance operation in Afghanistan.

As per the focused, comparison method, the same questions were applied to each case before comparing the results. The first question confirmed that national strategic aims, end states or objectives were established for each mission, but those aims can have varying degrees of specificity. Further,

whether they are met or not can be based on the governments final interpretation of their own goals. It showed that the terms aim, end state, and objectives did not hold the same meaning at operational and strategic levels and that they are used interchangeably by senior leadership. Additionally, exit strategy can interfere with both the formation and completion of national strategic aims, unless redeployment itself is a primary national aim. The second question asked if the military end state, with associated conditions, was properly established and met. While the military end states always seemed to be established, there were many factors that affected their completion, such as appropriate adjustments corresponding to political change, lack of adjustment corresponding with changed national strategic aims, and the execution of exit strategy either overcoming or being confused with mission completion. The third question was if the national strategic aims or military end state were appropriately adjusted during operations. The question had mixed results with Operation Desert Storm amendments being well executed, Operation Restore Hope experiencing the expected divergence of strategic aims and military end state, and the Canadian operations adjusting at both strategic and operational levels, but potentially while departing from a military end state and focusing on exit strategy. The fourth and final question was if flexible military end state conditions lead to maintained positions of positive advantage versus states of positive advantage. From the literature review, flexibility comes military end states that are both transitional and adaptive. However, analysis shows that this can be interpreted two ways: the way end states are written and the way they are planned. This was reflected in the cases, since Operations Desert Storm and Athena had rigidly written military end states, but they were planned with transition in mind, which generally led to success. Alternatively, Operation Restore Hope saw vague military end states that appeared to provide flexibility, but were not neither transition-focused nor integrated with strategic aims, leading to failure. All of these questions and corresponding answers enabled analysis of the thesis and hypotheses.

Originally, the thesis was that clear strategic aims combined with flexible military end state conditions will better maintain positions of positive advantage than the use of rigid end states that are focused on momentary success. The two hypotheses were: (1) when strategic aims are clear, then military end state conditions will be properly established; and (2) when the military end state conditions are

flexible, then they are better able to adjust with the changing strategic and political objectives. The first hypothesis was fully supported by the findings, but the findings for the second hypothesis were mixed. The difference between flexibly written or flexibly planned military end states arose, which directly related to the significance of the study - that military leaders must deviate from their tactical application of end states. This concept of flexibly planned military end states was what enabled positions of positive advantage to be maintained. Therefore, terms like military end state may still have some connection with the tactical level definitions in the way they are written, but much less so in the way they are planned. Military end states must be planned with greater consideration for transition, adaption and maintenance of positions of positive advantage. This led to an alteration of the thesis, which was supported by the findings and analysis, namely that clear strategic aims combined with *flexibly planned* military end state conditions will better maintain positions of positive advantage than the use of rigid military end states that are focused on momentary success.

When considering the future, military leaders should understand that although words have doctrinally defined definitions, there are less-defined interpretations that may arise as they progress from the tactical into the operational and strategic levels. Additionally, those military terms may be used differently by government officials. As the study identified, flexibility came less from the wording of military end states and more from the transitional thinking and planning of the leadership. Future study could involve an examination on how to modify planning education to better provide understanding of the complexity surrounding operational and strategic terminology. Additionally, planners and leaders should be taught to communicate objectives and military end states that provide clear direction for operations while considering a more transitional nature of maintaining positions of positive advantage.

This study began with the goal of improving understanding of doctrinal terminology surrounding end states and objectives. The study showed that there may be several interpretations of terminologies to describe operational and strategic goals and that part of the improved understanding may actually come from accepting the lack of common definitions. Furthermore, while using doctrinal terminology may provide a common language, it does not guarantee that everyone has chosen to speak that language.

Through improved understanding of these concepts, leaders can communicate clear strategic aims combined with flexibly planned military end state conditions that will better maintain positions of positive advantage.

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