



A Tale of Four Memos

(and a draft Op-Ed)

Recent U.S. DoD wargaming kerfluffle

Connections UK 2015

Peter P. Perla

September 2015

A Dickensian tale

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...

Best of times, worst of times



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

NOV 15 2014

MEMORANDUM FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
DEPUTY CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER
CHIEFS OF THE MILITARY SERVICES
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER
ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: The Defense Innovation Initiative

I am establishing a broad, Department-wide initiative to pursue innovative ways to sustain and advance our military superiority for the 21st Century and improve business operations throughout the Department. We are entering an era where American dominance in key warfighting domains is eroding, and we must find new and creative ways to sustain, and in some areas expand, our advantages even as we deal with more limited resources. This will require a focus on new capabilities and becoming more efficient in their development and fielding.

We are entering an era where American dominance in key warfighting domains is eroding.

- A reinvigorated wargaming effort will develop and test alternative ways of achieving our strategic objectives and help us think more clearly about the future security environment.

Age of wisdom, age of foolishness



DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1010

FEB 09 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
CHIEFS OF THE MILITARY SERVICES
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION
DIRECTOR OF THE DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
DIRECTOR, NET ASSESSMENT

SUBJECT: Wargaming and Innovation

I am concerned that the Department's ability to test concepts, capabilities, and plans using simulation and other techniques—otherwise known as wargaming—has atrophied. To

Reinvigorate, institutionalize, systematize wargaming across the department.

Military-relevant systems and technologies are changing quickly and new tactical and operational challenges are intensifying and proliferating, all during a period of fiscal pressure. During similar periods of technological and geostrategic flux, wargaming proved to be a useful tool both for improving our understanding of complex, uncertain environments and the changing character of warfare. When done right, wargames spur innovation and provide a mechanism for addressing emerging challenges, exploiting new technologies, and shaping the future security environment. They can potentially make the difference between wise and unwise investment trajectories and make our forces more successful in future conflicts.

- Highlights
 - Changing tech and systems
 - Tactical/operational challenges
 - Fiscal pressure
- Wargames can “make the difference” between wise and unwise investments and success in conflict

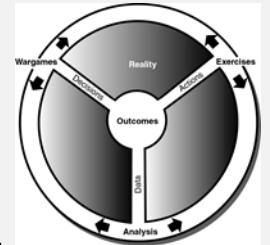
Wisdom and foolishness

- Real gamers "wargame"; Poseurs "war game"
- "Reinvigorate" to cross energy barrier
- Wargaming as full partner with OR/SA, exercises, real world

- Dangers of "system"
- Purveyors of sims and bogsattery
- Calling everything a wargame: seminars, facilitated discussions
- CSWPs and campaign analysis

Wisdom: the Cycle of Research?

- “Wargaming, in concert with operational analysis, and experimentation, ... should feed into ... strategy development as well as our Planning Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) process.”
- Hybrid approach combining seminar wargaming and portfolio-rebalancing exercises to identify program deficiencies and potential budget offsets.



Epoch of belief, epoch of incredulity



DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1010 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1010

MAY 08 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION
DIRECTOR, NET ASSESSMENT

SUBJECT: Wargaming Summit Way Ahead

We are entering a critical period for the United States. While resetting and reconstituting the Joint Force after 13 years of war, we must turn our attention to numerous emerging challenges to U.S. global leadership. In this dynamic environment, Department leaders are now making important programmatic decisions to meet these challenges. Wargaming is an important means of informing those decisions and spurring innovation.

Accordingly, Vice Chairman Winnefeld and I co-hosted a Wargaming Summit on April 23, 2015, to explore how we could better align the wargaming enterprise with Department decision-making. As a result of feedback from summit participants, I direct the following tasks:

Belief and (my) incredulity

- Wargame Repository
- JS summarize/report
- Quad chairs, DWAG, “wargaming enterprise” link to senior leaders
- Support scenarios, CONOPS, capability capacity issues (SSA)
- Senior series to support planning

- Bureaucratic churn?
- Death by PowerPoint
- Who are DWAG, where is the “wargaming enterprise?”
- Policy—Joint Staff—CAPE coordination—who and how?
- Seniors don't play games! How to fix?

Season of light, season of darkness



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

May 5, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

SUBJECT: Wargaming

Wargaming is an invaluable method used to assess new ideas, question existing practices, stimulate innovation, and develop new operational concepts in a risk-friendly environment. This type of exercise informs national policy, prepares our warfighters for successful combat operations, and contributes to the development of our Sailors and Marines as professionals and as strategic thinkers. The wargaming approach can be used at all command levels and across every mission area in the Department of the Navy (DON).

We must evolve our approach to wargaming so that it contemplates the future challenges our Sailors and Marines will encounter, and the types of decisions they must make. In order to do so, the Navy and Marine Corps shall:

Virtual CoP: Light or darkness?

- Initial intention to model on
 - Center for International Maritime Security
 - MORS Wargaming CoP
- Should support
 - Collaborative relationships
 - Disseminating lessons learned and knowledge base
 - Advance the state of the art



Light and darkness

1. Virtual COP
2. Iterative games for strategy, campaign analysis, experimentation
3. Influence PPBES
4. Restart ONR TIGs
5. Emerging tech, prob models, data analytics
6. Share actionable insights, cross event/longitudinal

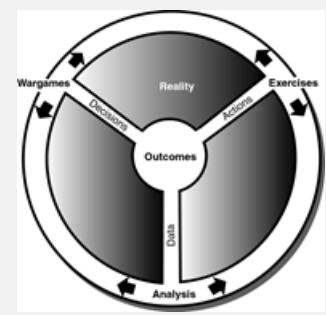
1. COP is not computers
2. Risks missing cross-connections; one approach fits all
3. Analyst opposition
4. Already backtracking
5. Qualitative methods up to challenge?
6. Varying assumptions, goals, designs

Spring of hope, winter of despair

WARGAMING OP-ED BY DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE BOB WORK (Draft)

Few historical periods match the dynamic technological disruption of the inter-war years of the 1920s and 1930s when militaries struggled to adapt to extraordinary advances in mechanization, aviation, amphibious warfare, submarines, and new technologies such as radio, radar, and sonar. While military planners and theorists intuitively realized they must develop new ways of fighting and make profound changes to organizational structures, they were forced to divine visions of future warfare with few clues to the way ahead.

Spring of hope



- The main points as I saw them
 - The proven importance of wargaming during a similar period of rapid change (the inter-war years) argues for reinvigorating and expanding its uses in similar ways today. **(Cycle of research)**
 - To be most effective, wargaming must make use of both proven best practices and creative new ideas. **Repository will help (?)**
 - Senior leaders need to have access to and use high quality wargames to develop their strategic skills and assist with high-level programmatic, policy and strategy decisions **(DWAG)**.
 - Leaders need to learn from and about wargames during **PME**. Wargaming courses should be required, taking advantage of the familiarity the younger generations have with gaming.

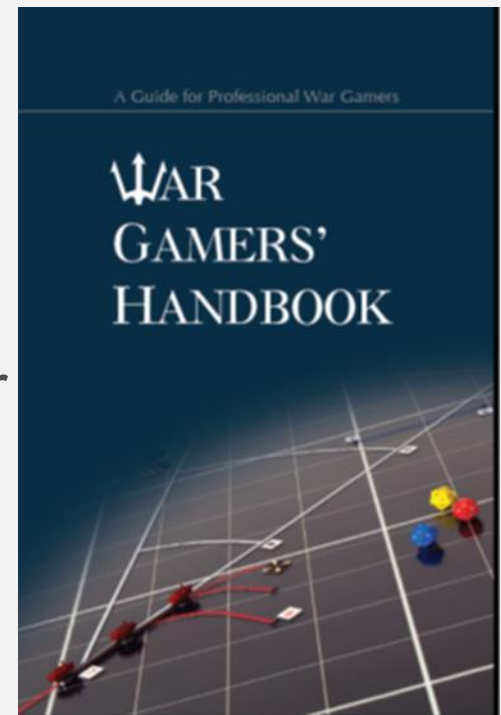
Spring of hope, winter of despair

- NWC trying to rebuild interwar success.
- USMC looking to build facility and develop NextGen Wargame.
- TRAC boardgame for leader development.
- USAF WI customer focus; low cost, responsive, objective.

- Current GWG series seem more discussion.
- NextGen may rely too much on tech if it goes the MMORPG route.
- But AWC shifting away from educational games.
- Will change of leadership at WI sustain the innovation?

Naval War College efforts

- Heavily committed to broad gaming program for fleet and others
- Working closely with OPNAV and the fleet to employ iterative series of focused topical games (GWG 2015)
- Recurring wargaming course for other services, DoD, other customers; lectures and practicum
- **War Plan Red/Halsey Alfa detailed iterative tactical gaming effort**



USMC wargaming initiatives

- Proposal to build permanent, stand-alone Marine Corps Wargaming Center in Quantico to enhance interoperability with the other Services/COCOM/Coalition wargaming centers.
- The Next Generation Wargame: evolve wargaming art and science to seamlessly represent a complex, evolving operational environment, provide in-stride adjudication, and accommodate the agility and imagination required for innovation.



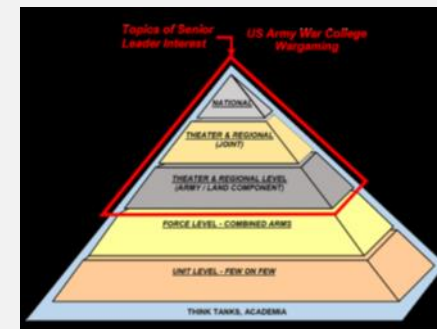
Army TRAC: *SSR: Mindanao*

- *Synthetic Staff Ride: Mindanao*: table-top wargame
- Designed and developed by TRAC and CNA, with participation of other USA/USN orgs.
- Give participants understanding of a complex operating environment and insights into leadership attributes and competencies.
- Create a strategic plan, manage resources and assets, apply DIME elements to achieve PMESII objectives through negotiation and risk.
- Observers capture player behaviors related to core leadership attributes such as character, presence and intellect.
- Used successfully by SOF Element; Department of Joint, Interagency and Multinational Operations; Army CGSC.



Army War College gaming

- Reorientation away from educational games to more research orientation
- Strategic wargames investigate, research and analyze strategic issues or areas not typically being addressed by other organizations.
- 6-8 Games per year characterized by
 - Academic environment
 - Land-power focused
 - Near to long-term political-military strategic level
 - Inform decision making at CoS, COCOM, components
 - Structured, facilitated interaction between experts



USAF Wargaming Institute

- Undergoing a reinvigoration of its own
- Philosophy: Turning challenges into choices.
- Pillars: responsive, low cost, objective
- Strong customer focus
 - Generate evidence for analysis to support decision making or research
 - Force decisions on specific issues and capture decisions and context (evidence)
 - Analyze and evaluate the evidence gathered to assist decision makers in turning challenges into actionable choices that can create a more desirable future



Air Guardian lessons

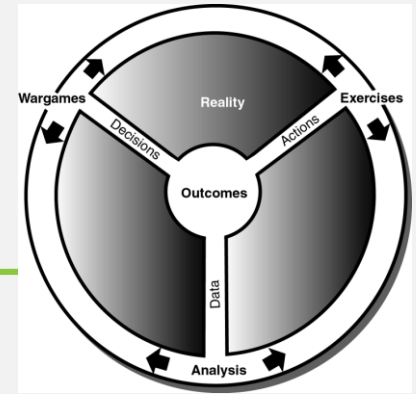
Stolen from Col. Howard Ward's Connections presentation

- Distributive Wargaming as Force Multiplier
- Cost Savings of approximately 70%
- Time Savings of approximately 92%
- Cost/Time savings unique to Air Guardian Wargame and may not be representative of every Wargame
- Allows for Blended Options to address Strategic Challenges
- Modeling and Simulation Limitations
- Unique ability to address MAJCOM and Combatant Commander Challenges

Winter of despair?

- Leaders know what they want.
- But put too much faith in process and bureaucracy to get it.
- Those are important but individual talent and creativity are needed too.
- How do we combine those to get past the energy barrier?
- Before 2016 threat to close window?

Wargamers must step up



- Partner with analysts and operators.
- Create better games—ones people “will remember playing.”
- Base them on solid foundations of experience and analysis—and feedback.
- Create a “magic circle” for players, analysts and leaders to play, explore, and practice.

From the past to the future



William McCarty Little—1912

The object of wargaming “is to afford a practice field for the acquirement of skill and experience in the conduct or direction of war, and an experimental and trial ground for the testing of strategic and tactical plans.”

“When from a study of the experience of past wars, and of that of *artificial* wars checked up by suitable trials in the fleet ... [enables] us to do the ‘RIGHT THING,’ ‘RIGHTLY APPLIED, ‘IN TIME,’ then, and only then, shall we fully realize the true meaning of the saying that ‘the best school of war is war!’”

