

Chapter 1

Introduction

Opening Speaker – Major General David Huntoon, US Army, Commandant of the US Army War College opened the workshop with these words:

John is a great leader and staff officer, so typically he gave me about 40 pages of opening comments, but I left them in my office. I left them there for a reason; not that they weren't well written but my message is really very simple; it's just "Welcome" to some great former friends and colleagues and for those of you who are new to this great place. We are delighted to have you here.

This is a very important conference for lots of reasons. You know this better than I do for you are the subject matter experts in a somewhat arcane science. There is a great deal of art in this business too. What you are fundamentally after this week, in the short time allotted, is how we approach education in this remarkable business of stability operations. We're trying very hard at the Army War College to hold together a very special team of our own experts, with operational and tactical experience – and some strategic experience – in this discipline. And we are expanding that organization and we invite all of you to join us. We are not only increasing our physical space, but hopefully adding to the intellectual capacity at the same time. This is not easy to do. There is still some cultural resistance in all our empires about this interesting topic, but I think we see more and more great support from all of the branches of the US government who are paying close attention to this because it is the way we are operating throughout the world. So I'm not going to give you any remarkable guidance or direction about what you should do for the next couple of days. I had a peek at the agenda and it looks like it makes all the sense in the world. We have brought together some really first class representatives of all the different disciplines that we must have in order to work through the issues.

All I would add to this opening is that there are some extraordinary resources here at the War College and if you don't have the chance to take advantage of them in the next 48 hours, you really need to come back to see us, because there really are some great information sources, and people, to support you in all your endeavors. Doug Lovelace heads the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI), one of the more remarkable think tanks in the US

government, right here at Carlisle Barracks. Some of his products are arrayed on the table outside the door. Please take all of those you wish – your tax dollars paid for the publication of those documents and you deserve to take them with you, especially those of you who pay taxes in Virginia. SSI is an extraordinary resource – take advantage of it. The folks who work there have great insight into much of the work you are doing.

But think about our students also. This place is fundamentally a 10 month graduate degree resident course of 340 students each year, and we are in about week 4 of the class of 2006. And that's the heart and soul of this institution, with a remarkable staff and faculty which is made up of wonderful young men and women who have proven their mettle on the world. Fifty-nine percent of the current class of 2006 just got back from Afghanistan or Iraq. They have extraordinary experiences in lots of areas; they know about this business and work towards finding the best ways to take an educated approach to the rest of the world about the all the nuances of this kind of business. So tap into that. They are required to write things here in order to prove their academic merit this year and we're always interested in getting interesting topics for them to write about and so attack into that.

Do any of you have any interest in history? I suspect the answer is each and every one of you has some interest. History of the United States Army rests here at Carlisle Barracks. Fourteen million items are right across the street, outside the back gate, close by the 7th hole of our magnificent golf course. They now sit in a state of the art archival repository which we opened last September. For sure go see that place regardless of whether or not you do it for PKSOI purposes or just as great citizens of the world. You understand the value of history; it's a remarkable site. People are very interested in helping find whatever topic you would like to pursue. There are some very special pieces about the history of this particular section. Tap into that also.

That's probably it. I'm just happy to have each and every one of you. We have a very good agenda. I've got to race off to greet the Secretary of the Army who will be joining us for supper tonight and we'll hear his address. Please tap into our resources. This is an extraordinary place filled with great promise and hope in educating for the future. Of those 340 students, mostly Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard, but we also have 40 International Officers. The operational perspectives they bring to the table – the fact that we are not only building cohesion but trust and confidence

this year – at some point down the road, in some God forsaken place in the middle of the night, the work that takes place here will have made all the difference in solving some extraordinary problem. So welcome to all of you. We'll see you tonight.