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Real Organizational Transformation:

Task Force DELTA and the U.S Army

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Introduction

        Organizations and institutions are at the heart of the study of collective security. This only makes sense because the collective, however defined, needs positive collaborative behavior by many of its individuals to ensure the safety and security of the group.   Thus, when security organizations undergo change, the change invariably has serious if not critical ramifications for the collective social entity. This paper focuses on national security associated with nation states. Specifically, it concentrates the discussion on the significant organizational changes that transformed the United States Army in the wake of the Vietnam War.   That war, and the accompanying social change in the United States itself, deeply affected the Army institution – personnel, training, doctrine, equipment, and most of all, culture. Even with the passage of time, it is difficult to view the below picture (Figure 1) without feeling some powerful emotion.

Figure 1
Black power salute at German Kaserne early 1970s

In less than half a decade, the Army had to withdraw from a major war that it had lost, fundamentally change the way it conducted its personnel business with the introduction of the Modern Volunteer Army that replaced the conscript draft Army, maintain its forward defensive stance along the Inter-German Border (IGB) as the first line of land deterrence, and begin to recapitalize itself from the extraordinary wastage that occurred during the Vietnam War. This was organizational transformation on an unprecedented scale. And yet, in the end, the Army was successful in the main (Nielsen, 2010; Young, 2014.) This essay presents a belated history of one of the components that led to the successful transformation, the experience of Task Force Delta.

This paper proceeds with its argument first by discussing and definition what organizational transformation means. Second, it will present the Army's transformation vectors as they existed back in the early 1970s. Third, the paper places Task Force Delta in the context of the transformation efforts at the time and in the context of organizational transformation theory. Fourth, the paper discusses the evolution and eventual dissolution of Task Force Delta, and explores the reasons for its demise. Fifth and finally, the paper will attempt to draw some conclusions and lessons learned that can be applied by current and future security organizations and institutions as they face increasingly complex, challenging and transformational times.

What Organizational Transformation Means

Organizational transformation usually is considered a subset of the discipline of organizational change (Poole and Van de Ven. 2004.) The term "transformation" is ambiguously defined and there appears no consensus on its technical meaning. Organizational transformation generally refers to deep and enduring organizational

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change (Van Tonder, 2004, 54-57.)   By this is meant second-order, fundamental, sustainable, complex, extreme and often unpredictable change (Van Tonder, 2004, 54-57.)   The organization undergoing a transformation literally is different in basic foundational ways than it was before the transformation; a revolution in structure and behavior has occurred (Romanelli and Tushman, 1994, 1141.)   The revolution can be understood to affect all domains of organizational activity (Romanelli and Tushman, 1994, 1146-1147) and therefore most or all organizational functions (Vego, 2007, VIII-3.) If one applies a systems' view to the organization, one can conclude that the transformation of an organization involves its people, technology, structure, tasks, and information flows (Leavitt, Dill & Eyring, 1973, 9.)   From a social ecological perspective, an organization undergoing transformation is moving from a stable or conserving state into a series of releasing (of energy, resources), reorganizing, and exploiting periods that enable the organization to move to a new stable state or domain (Gunderson and Holling, 2002, Chapter 1.) Thus, the transformational organization is one where there exists much dynamism and instability; the environment of such an organization, varying in vectors of people, space and time, likely is a place ripe for innovation (Poole and Van de Ven, Chapter 1.) Of the transformed organization's leadership, it can be observed that they have undergone a deep and profound change in outlook and behavior (Quinn, 1996. 217-219); they literally perceive the world differently and engage it accordingly. Individual leaders' very brains have become rewired in these cases (Rock, 2009. 241-244.)

This short synopsis of organizational transformation should demonstrate to the read that transformation is difficult, expensive, and rare.   Organizations or groups only

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engage transformation when their survival depends on it. To adopt a paraphrase describing types of war that nation states engage, transformation is an act of necessity, not merely an act of choice. This was the situation of the United States Army in the early 1970s as the Vietnam War was winding down, the domestic social upheaval (revolution?) in full swing, and conscription, the fundamental method by which the Army organization obtained its most vital resource, people, was going away.

The Situation of the United States Army in the early to mid-1970s

I was commissioned an officer in the U.S. Army on June 1st, 1970, less than one month following my successful efforts to organize a large campus-wide protest of the National Guard shootings at Kent State University and the Army's incursion into Cambodia. That one sentence sums up the conundrum facing the Army throughout the first half of the 1970s. Soldiers still served their country, and their country's war (Vietnam), while at the same time exercising what they believed were their civil rights as citizens. The Army, as an organization, faced a turbulent operating environment composed of a dynamically changing overseas combat situation in Vietnam, and an at least equally changing domestic social and political stage. The organization faced an existential crisis that required it to literally alter every systemic aspect of its being (Young, 2014. 76-79.) Transformation, or deep change across structure, people, technology, tasks, and information flows, offered the Army its only alternative for organizational survival (Nielsen, 2010. 1-4.)

Beginning with organizational structure, the Army had to downsize from over 1.5 million soldiers to 780,000 as the country disengaged from the Vietnam War (Wong, 2013.) This reduction in force led to significant restructuring of the Army's major

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commands, eliminating one (Continental Army Command or CONARC), and creating two specialized ones (Training and Doctrine Command or TRADOC, and Forces Command or FORSCOM) (King, 2008. 1-2.)   This essay pays especial attention to Training and Doctrine Command, for it was under that organization's auspices that Task Force Delta came into being.

The people who made up the Army of the 1970s was radically changing, requiring a significant organizational response.   The change can be captured by looking at the source of manpower and leadership.   Addressing the change in sources of Army manpower is the most straightforward: by the middle of 1973, the United States had ended conscription, which served as the overwhelming source of its force.   Replacing it was the Modern Volunteer Army, shortened to VOLAR or MVA; this was a 100 percent professional force.   The challenge, it was clear, was to create incentives to join an organization that was (a) losing a war; (b) reviled as both criminal and incompetent; and (c) containing few incentives (the pay remained the same as for conscripts) Malone, 1986. Chapter II; Loory, 1973; Savage and Gabriel, 1979; Young, 2014. 86-89.)   With respect to leadership, one word summed up the need for the Army the radically think about how it led its soldiers: fragging. Fragging was and is the deliberate and murderous assault on military leaders by their own followers. Though such attacks had been known throughout the history of warfare, they took on significance during Vietnam because of the suspected numbers of incidents and the perception of fragging (Lepre, 2001.)[1] There was a crisis of leadership during that war that seemed to grow as the war continued its

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[1] Perception was reality among the officer when it came to fragging. Even though I cannot recall one incident of fragging at the Army posts and bases to which I was assigned from 1970 to 1973, there was a consistent underlying perceived fear among many officers that they might be attacked by their subordinates; I knew one fellow officer who, although in a garrison situation far from any combat zone, slept in different rooms in his home every night to disrupt any attacks. He was never attacked.

protracted course; recognizing the problem, General Westmoreland, the Chief of Staff of the Army, called for a comprehensive study of Army leadership. The results of that study were damning. Junior leaders did not trust mid-level leaders; mid-level leaders did not trust their senior leaders; and senior leaders believed their subordinates to be incompetent (USAWC Study of Leadership for the Professional Soldier, 1971.) The last paragraph of the report bears special mention:

> "The task for Army leadership, then, is to insure that, in all his interactions and relationships with the Army, the professional soldier – in light of his background, values, and expectations – will view his relationship with the Army as one which is supportive and which builds and maintains his sense of personal worth and importance. He is a party to the contract – and the Army's investment in the interests of his human values will, in time, create the loyalty and dedication which are the cornerstones of true discipline, and which will lead the soldier to sacrifice his own needs on those few critical occasions where there must be a showdown between mission and men."
> (USAWC Study of Leadership for the Professional Soldier, 1971, 62.)

Leadership can only be successful where there exists trust among leader and led, however defined (Burke, Sims, Lazzara, Salas, 2007. 606-632); it is clear that such trust was lacking in the Army of the early 1970s; another requirement for organizational transformation was fulfilled.

Technology also drove Army transformation in the 1970s because the conflicting demands of the Vietnam War and the Cold War stand-off along the NATO front in Central Europe. The Army was using up its equipment at a prodigious rate (one estimate has the Army losing over 5,000 of its more than 11,000 helicopters in Vietnam alone). With the drawdown from the Vietnam conflict – even before the war ended, Congress reduced appropriations for replacement and recapitalization of lost equipment (Sorley, 1999. 127.) The Army had recognized the need to recapitalize, and had begun pursuit of what would become the "Big Five" major weapons systems that to a large extent define

Army equipment to this very day (Trybula, 2012.) There was recognition that the recapitalization of technology would need to be incorporated with significant improvements in the human capabilities of soldiers, far beyond that which might be expected from a conscript force; this need was driven by the information requirements that appeared to be essential to enable the Army to successfully prosecute its main mission in the wake of Vietnam, the defense of Central Europe against a massive onslaught by the Soviet Union (Malone, 1980. 2-6.) Only through transformation of the equipment-human interface within the Army could this be achieved.

The final systems' component to be considered in the Army's situation of the 1970s is its missions and tasks. Throughout the Vietnam conflict, the Army tried to reconcile two very different forms of conducting war: conventional major combat and counterinsurgency. Each calls for very different sets of tasks and soldiers' behaviors (Crane, 2016.) By the early 1970s, the differences had been resolved: counterinsurgency was going away, to be replaced by a central focus on conventional major combat (Crane, 2016.) The focus was on the Battlefield Development Doctrine, the centerpiece of which was the Central Battle (Starry). The method for conducting this battle was to be AirLand Battle. While AirLand Battle did have a lower intensity conflict dimension (Morelli), clearly the Army believed that it needed to concentrate its tasks and missions on combat taking place at the more intense levels of the spectrum of conflict.

Task Force Delta and Army Transformation

The Army conducted its organizational transformation from a Vietnam-centric, conscript force to a Central European-centric, professional force in fits and starts. There was terrific blowback from both within the service and from external stakeholders over

all the new proposed technologically advanced weapons systems (Trybula and Schubert and Kraus). Defense Reform Movement advocates admonished the Army over its supposed reluctance to embrace maneuver warfare vice attrition tactics (Lind). Reviewing *Military Review* issues from 1977 through 1985 reveals extraordinary frank and critical discussion *within* the Army over the various components of the transformation. However, there were two constants, one structural the other processual, in the transformation: the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and senior Army leadership. TRADOC had the mission of making Army forces ready for whatever missions and tasks given to it (Romjue.) TRADOC was a new organization with a new direction and new leadership; to that end, it was well suited to lead the Army in its transformation efforts. Senior Army leadership, especially at the Chief of Staff of the Army and Commander, TRADOC, provided the inspirational push and bureaucratic top cover for the organizational transformation to occur (Romjue, Canedy, and Chapman.)

By 1978, the transformation was well underway. General William Dupuy had been the first commander of TRADOC. He concentrated his tenure on development of the right doctrine for the right mission and tasks of the Army. General Dupuy was responsible for the first overhaul of Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations*, since before the Vietnam conflict; the resulting document, though highly controversial, represented a significant milestone in changing the direction of Army operations from one concentrating on counterinsurgency to major combat operations on the Central European front. His deputy, General Paul Gorman, focused on training; General Gorman is considered the father of the National Training Center (NTC) at Ft. Irwin, California and the accompanying training revolution that made NTC and its associated centers such

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a strong influence on improving Army training performance (Romjue, Chapman.)

Dupuy's successor was General Donn Starry, a highly decorated armor officer, who both

widened and deepened the Army's entire approach to conducting war, shifting from

Dupuy's "Active Defense" to an integrated, joint concept called AirLand Battle

(Doughty, Davis III.) Starry envisioned the Army's problem this way:

> The concept [extended battlefield] emphasizes the all too
> frequently ignored or misunderstood lesson of history that once
> political authorities commit military forces in pursuit of political
> aims, military forces must win something, or else there will
> be no basis from which political authorities can bargain to win
> politically. Therefore, the purpose of military operations cannot
> be simply to avert defeat [ala Vietnam], but, rather, it must be
> to win. (Starry 1981)

Starry had been a member of the Army's observation team to Israel in the wake of the

1973 Yom Kippur War, and had seen firsthand the effects modern conventional combat.

He knew that something more than technology, more than doctrine, and more than force

structure – all components of organizational transformation – was necessary to win

modern wars, especially when outnumbered; but, he could not put his finger on just what

that was. So, Starry brought in a trusted , respected and intelligent confidant, Colonel

Dandridge Michael Malone, to study the matter with a group, and make

recommendations in the (conceived) form of a new manual.   He directed the group in a

memorandum on "highly effective forces" on June 8, 1978. In that document, he spelled

out the issue:

> …the message I'm trying to draw out…has to do with the effectiveness of
> units. For it is quite clear to me that, unless we have an Army in which
> most units are somewhere in the effectiveness range represented by the
> "well-trained crews in well-trained units" delta, we haven't a prayer in a
> battle in Central Europe for sure, and probably not much of one against
> larger Soviet-trained and equipped armies in the Middle East." (Starry 1978)

Starry wanted Malone to form a group reporting directly to him (Starry), study the issue, develop a manual that would both describe and prescribe in "plain, expository English" how the Army could develop and maintain highly effective units. He even named the group: Task Force Delta, the delta representing the difference between where the Army was in force readiness and where it needed to be to be victorious in future wars (Starry, 1978, 796.)

Malone shared with Starry the distinction of being a highly experienced combat veteran with a strong intellectual background. He had received a Masters' degree in social psychology from Purdue University, studying with Karl Weick. Malone was an accomplished author by 1978, and though outspoken, an organizational advocate for all things Army; he was an epitome of an internal reformer. Malone had co-authored with Walter Ulmer the famous Westmoreland Leadership Study of 1970, which pointed out the many failures of leadership that plagued the Army during the Vietnam War. He was on a fast track to becoming a general office, like his co-author Ulmer (who would eventually become a lieutenant general), but wrote a scathing, truthful critique of the Army personnel system published in Army magazine in 1973 (Malone, 1973.) Instead, Malone would reach colonel and flat-line until his retirement in 1981.[2]

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[2] In 2005, I started research on Task Force DELTA. My work took me to Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, home of the Military History Institute, the repository for Malone's historical material. When I asked a reference librarian at the Institute for access to his material (in a quiet library-like way), I felt a finger poke me in the back of the shoulder. I had asked to see material on "Mad Mike" Malone, a name that I had come across in some written pieces I had. The person who poked me, an older gentleman obviously a former military person, said pointedly and loud enough for everyone in the room to hear: "No one ever called him Mad Mike. And he was the best damned combat leader the Army ever had!" I thanked him for the correction. Malone had been dead almost a decade when this happened. That is testimony to the extent of the man's reputation. He also was the author of a still famous narrative poem, "Soldier," which once was handed out as a cassette to all students at the Army War College for some years. Finally, there is an unpublished book of his writings, *The Trailwatcher*, that is still in digital circulation, Two of the persons who wrote testimonials for the book were Walter Ulmer and Donn Starry. Malone's one published book, *Small Unit Leadership: A Commonsense Approach* remains in publication more than three decades after its publication; it is still a mainstay in tactical leadership training in the U.S. Army.

Following Starry's direction, Malone developed a mostly voluntary task force of some 50 people, mostly military but also with significant academic and corporate representation. Headquartered out of the Systems Development Office (SDO) of the Headquarters, Commanding General, Training and Doctrine Command, DELTA operated as what today would be called a node-free network, using state-of-the-art communications and referencing technology, including a prototypical internet run on a dedicated terminal system serviced by the University of Michigan (it appears, however that most of the communications among members was hardcopy mail or teletype dictation). Because the task force was voluntary, Malone developed a remarkable organization chart: rather than the normal hierarchal "wiring diagram," DELTA's organization chart, the initial version of which is captured in Figure 1 below, was in the form of a bulls-eye; the center constituted the core membership, and successive outer circles showed individual and organizational participants and contributions.
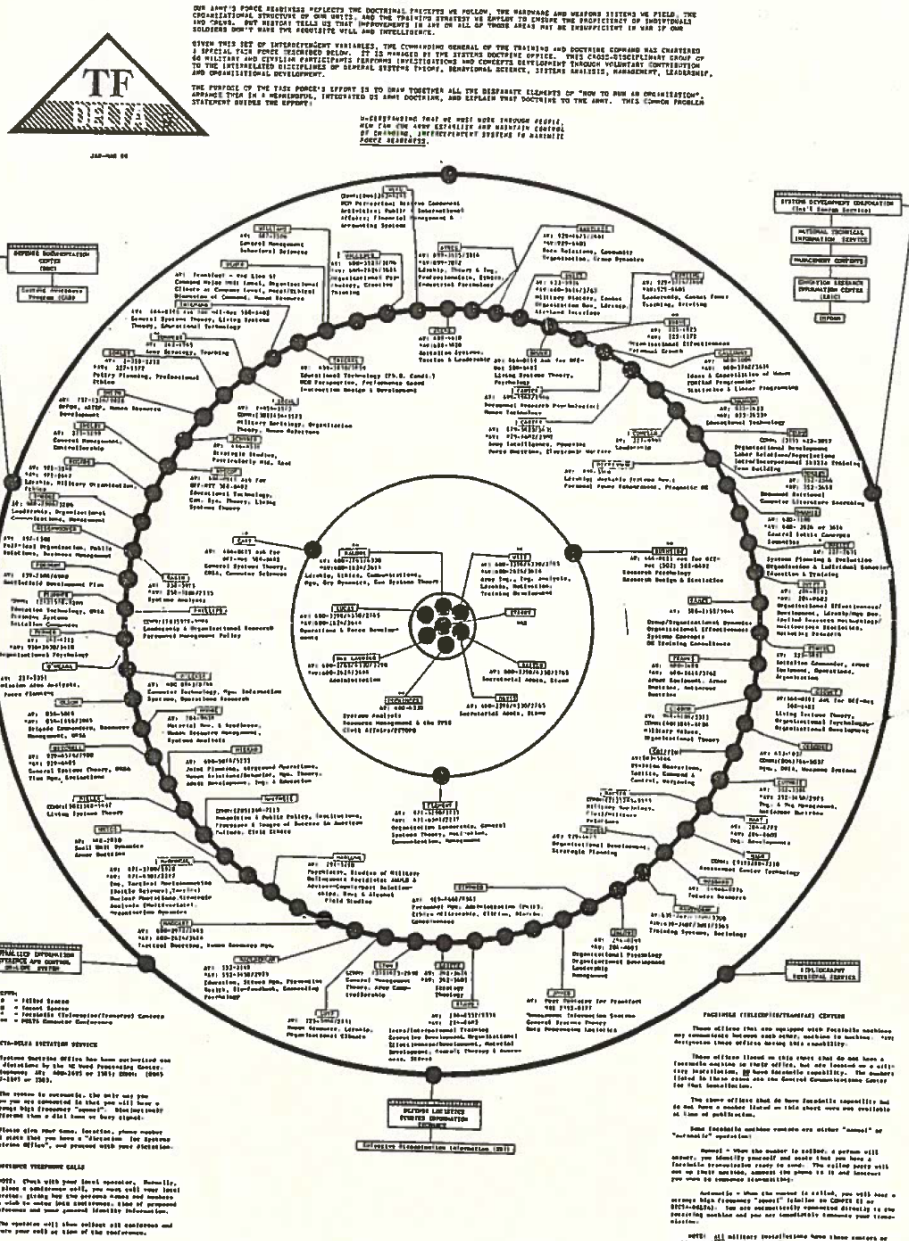
Figure 1
Task Force DELTA Organizational Chart 1980

TF DELTA translated Starry's concerns about highly effective units into a problem statement. It read "Understanding that we must work through people, how can our Army establish and maintain control of changing, interdependent systems to

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maximize force readiness.?"[3] The task force insisted on a common format for its concept

papers to facilitate communications, and sorted the subjects of the concept papers into

one of six "Study Thrusts:"

1. Process of Influencing People
2. Process of Control
3. The Dynamics of Change
4. The Nature of Interdependence
5. The Science of Systems
6. The Dynamics of Force Readiness

A later iteration of the task force, interestingly named DELTA FORCE (not to be

confused with the Special Operations unit of the same name), changed the study thrusts

and added a seventh; the result was thus:

1. Planning the Force
2. Equipping the Force
3. Manning the Force
4. Running the Force
5. Training the Force
6. Fighting the Force
7. The Future Force

All proposed concept papers were circulated to all members for formal comment

and recommendation. Malone's office published those that passed the review of the

members. Although there is no formal count of the total number of DELTA concept

papers, the library at the U.S. Army War College, holding most of the task force

products, has two full binders constituting almost two hundred papers. None, however,

was more important than the first, authored by Malone that served as an initial report to

Starry on the answer to his problem: how to solve the force readiness challenge of highly

effective units? That answer was found in the title of the monograph, "X = H."

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[3] This question was placed near the top of every title page for every concept paper associated with TF
DELTA.

Task Force DELTA had labored over a year to find an answer to Starry's problem statement.   Their answer was that the desired change in force readiness (the "X" in the title) could be achieved by more efficient and more effective information flow and management (the physics symbol for Information is H.) They had come to the realization that units are systems, living systems that operate in environments that are changing and uncertain (Malone, 1980.) This realization colored how they defined and solved their problem. They had found research going back two decades conducted by the Army's own Human Resources Research Office (HumRRO) for General Gorman that showed consistently that those units, focusing on commanders and staffs, that best managed information flows had significantly better performance in crisis situations. These high performing units were able to learn better as an organization and more quickly adapt to the overwhelmingly confusing and information intensive opening moments of an engagement (Olmstead.)   The HumRRO researchers had used Schein's Adaptive Coping Cycle model of organizational learning to quantify their research; Schein's model is explicitly an organizational system learning theory (Schein.) Their first research project (FORGE) used Ft. Benning officer students in their experimental scenarios in the late 1960s; their second project (CARDINAL) used actual battalions of the 8th Infantry Division during REFORGER exercises in Germany in the 1970s. The results were close to identical. Effective organizational learning led to statistically significantly more effective unit performance.

The Task Force also found a third set of studies, even more extensive than the HumRRO work, that had been sponsored by the Army in conjunction with the University of Louisville (UoL) Systems Science Institute, and confirmed and expanded on the

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HumRRO research. This work used Living Systems Theory (LST) as the research model (Miller.) The LST model that all living systems from one celled organisms through supra-national entities are matter and energy organized by information; the systems are in effect fractal, and contain the same twenty sub-systems or processes. The UoL research used over eighty Army battalions as experimental subjects, and found they could map these subsystems into the regular unit processes; once again, those units that best managed information flows were the high performing units.

The Task Force report then translated the findings into actionable recommendations, called "3X3X3" approach, which constituted three levels of the Army (operational, coordinative, strategic) based on other Army research on the requisite organization theory of Elliott Jaques (Jaques), three concepts of operation (develop information engineering, put affective dimension of information to work, formulate and articulate Army philosophy and values), and three parts to each concept.   The report graphically portrayed this as follows in Figure 2:
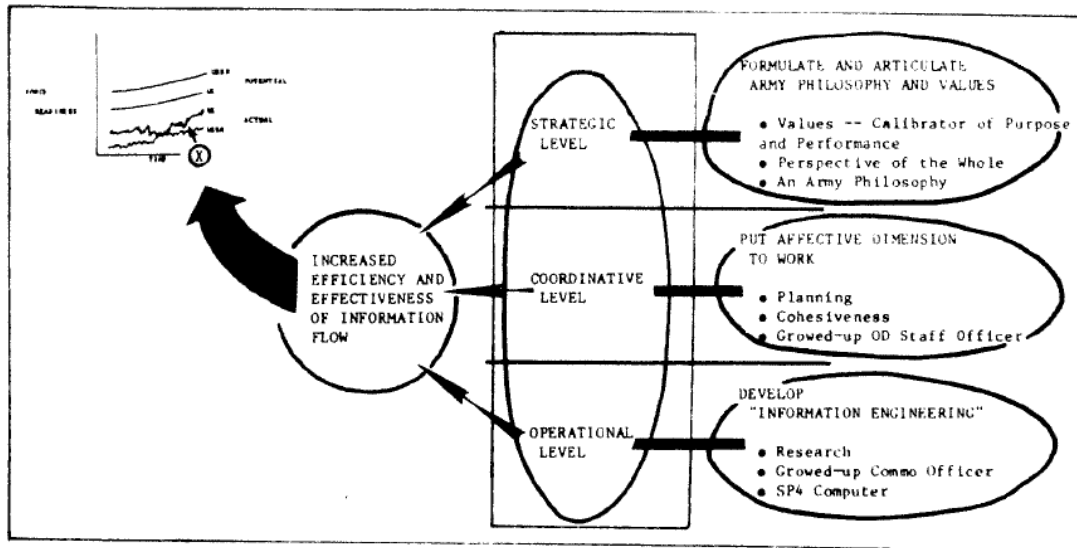
FIGURE 2
Sketch of 3X3X3 Concept in "X=H"

Task Force DELTA had learned that information flows are more than just bytes; they involved application of what the bytes meant – information meaning. Technology had to be melded with psychology, and both with ethical (values) philosophy. There was a necessary interdependence among their recommendations that characterized organizational systems' thinking at the time. They made no claim to exclusivity, modestly claiming that none of recommendations called for drastic change. Rather, the report stated that these proposals were evolutionary, "…extending, expanding, "growing up" things we are already doing, through the application of what we have learned through science…" (Malone, 1980, 50.)

Archival records are not specific on how Army leadership received the report. However, from personal correspondence of Malone, it appears that leadership seems to approve of the report's contents. Work began on what would become the Army Leadership Manual, *Military Leadership,* Field Manual (FM) 22-100, first published in

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1983. This was followed by FM 22-103, *Leadership and Command at Senior Levels*, in 1987. Thus, the strategic level with its concepts of operation recommended by DELTA found its way into implementation and incorporation in Army doctrine and practice.

Less successful was the implementation of the mid-level concepts and components of the report. FM 22-100 did directly address the affective dimension of information, but did not make the connection to actual planning and execution of operations. The entire Organizational Development sub-specialty within the Army, recommended to be enhanced in the report, disappeared by 1989. Least successful in implementation were the recommendation associated with the most tactical and organizationally specific level, operations. Information Engineering, though a topic for the second DELTA report (Witt), would not be captured in any doctrine or manual. Essentially, the operational level proposals required that the Army consider all operations, from tactical to strategic, as information operations in which both the internal health of the unit and well as its performance against enemies on the battlefield depended on how well it cohered itself as a unit, and how well it could adapt to, or cause to be adapted, its relevant operating environment.   While the training revolution that simultaneously occurred with the Army's transformation in the post-Vietnam era did result in cohesive unit operations that also were highly adaptive to changing circumstances, the Army never quite came to terms with the necessity of thinking and acting as if all operations were information operations. One could observe that this has been an enduring problem for Army units in the extremely challenging environments characterized by 21st Century operations that constitute "Grey Zone" or "Hybrid" warfare.

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Evolution and Dissolution of Task Force DELTA

By the time DELTA published its initial report, in 1980, its center of operation had shifted from Headquarters, TRADOC to the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. Malone, now beginning his final tour of active duty, had requested reassignment to the War College, and took the DELTA team with him.[4] It is also reasonable to infer that Malone also expected the high visibility profile of DELTA to continue as at that time the War College answered directly to the Chief of Staff of the Army – General Edward ("Shy") Meyer, who knew and respected Malone's work. The move to the War College also meant a name change, from Task Force DELTA to DELTA Force, and a focus change as mentioned in an earlier paragraph. The numbers of people contributing time and effort continued to grow, eventually culminating in about 90 members according to a later (1982) address list. When Malone did retire in 1981, Lieutenant Frank L. Burns (no kidding!) became the director of DELTA force.[5] Malone remained engaged as a civilian, working from his home in Sansibel, Florida.

DELTA had taken to meeting quarterly with its members and clients (senior Army leaders.) Based on agenda associated with these meetings, it appears that the meetings started as In Process Reviews (IPRs) and became discussions for new venues of research. Because DELTA was involved with the interpersonal and informational cement

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[4] Dates are approximate and can be inferred from the disclaimer information on every DELTA concept paper. In 1980, the disclaimer address changed from HQ TRADOC to the War College. In Malone's personal archives, he makes note in correspondence of his desire to finish his career at the War College teaching leadership.

[5] Burns has a Wikipedia page that is very misleading, in that the page indicates that DELTA was a community of Army "psychic adepts" that met at Ft. Leavenworth, KS. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_L._Burns. It also states that DELTA began in 1983, which is patently wrong. The Army OESO community to which Burns belonged had begun exploring alternative psychological theories, including those involving parapsychological phenomena. Malone may have believed Burns was taking DELTA in that direction, but there is no direct evidence. For reference, consult Jon Ronson's *The Men Who Stare At Goats*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004.

and glue that integrated the Army's transformation efforts in equipment, training and doctrine, there was always some new venue of interest. Burns' own interest, being an Organizational Effectiveness Staff Officer (OESO), lay in the direction of organizational psychology and organizational behavioral aspects of unit performance. By late 1982, Malone appeared to be dissatisfied with the directions DELTA was taking, moving away from organizational leadership issues and more towards organizational effectiveness; he detected that the group had lost the visibility with senior leadership and had begun to close ranks around the OESO community to the exclusion of other Army specialties. By mid-1983, Malone had openly split with the organization, and returned awards associated with DELTA. He captured his bitterness in a strongly worded teletyped correspondence to Burns in which he accused the organization of being more interested in its own interests and being politically correct than in pursuing answers to Starry's original problem statement.[6] Based on the ending dates of the DELTA Force Concept Papers, one can infer that the group dissolved sometime early in 1984.

Conclusions and Lessons Learned

The United States Army underwent an organizational transformation in the late 1970s that lasted until the mid-1980s. During that time, the very foundation of the service, the soldier, changed from a conscript to a professional; the major tools of the trade, weapons, changed; the doctrines by which the Army ran changed; and the way the service executed that doctrine, in training, changed. Together, this amounted to the organizational culture also changing. Upon reflection, Task Force DELTA in its focus on finding an answer to improving force readiness, actually concentrated its work on that culture, using information as the investigative vector to explore how to improve and

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[6] Personal correspondence to LTC Frank Burns in Malone Archive, 1983, unsorted.

integrate all the changes that the Army was experiencing. DELTA consciously never chose to be a high profile effort; Malone designed the task force work in the background, being a facilitator rather than an advocate or executor. In that regard, he was too successful for historical researchers face significant challenges in finding accurate references to its work and products. In this author's opinion, DELTA's greatest legacy was threefold: first, it introduced new systems-based leadership thinking into mainstream Army behavior. Second, it introduced the centrality of information management flows, with its necessary focus on collaborative organizational decision-making, into mainstream Army planning and thinking. And third, as alluded to above, DELTA brought the idea of organizational culture into the discussion of how the Army runs. Many organizational change researchers have noted that successful organizational change, especially transformation, requires successful alteration of the organization's culture; DELTA was just ahead of its time (Bass and Avolio.) The task force did not produce an "FM-X: How To Run an Organization," as Malone put it, but they laid the groundwork for bringing all the parts of a necessary and (eventually) successful organizational transformation of the Army into an integrated whole.

Task Force DELTA was a unique organization within an larger military service that was facing both internal and external existential challenges to its existence. It was a high performance organization that excited its members and, for a while, excited its clients (senior Army leadership.) That much can be garnered by reviewing the many concept papers and general officer comments on its work. An old saying goes, strange times produce strange heroes and heroines; that seems applicable here. As long has DELTA had a well respected leader from the combat arms, Malone, and active leadership

support, Starry and Meyer, the larger organization tolerated and even embraced the strangeness. But such a combination, reliant as it is on dynamic interpersonal relationships and the inevitable tenuousness of military assignments, also means that the task force's days were numbered from the very beginning. Indeed, many observers note that the Army's own transformation efforts effectively were completed by 1982 (Nielsen, Romjue, Lombardo.) What would be the need of a task force searching for answers to a question that was already answered?

I find there are two lessons we can take from the case of Task Force DELTA that bear on the issue of national security studies. The first lesson is that the real history of events is often hidden and small; unless I stumbled upon a dead colleague's notes in 2000, I likely would never have known of Malone and his task force, and as recent academic historical scholarship indicates, no one else would have known of its contributions. This is a humility lesson for it clearly shows that even within our own lifetimes, so much of what has transpired remains behind of veil of ignorance. There is always something new to be known about the world. Second, small efforts and organizations can have disproportionate and strategic consequences. Task Force DELTA never was more than a handful of full-time employees and around 100 (maximum) volunteers; its budget truly was, in Pentagon-ese, "digit dust." Yet, it can be stated that materially and substantially contributed to changing the very nature and fabric of the United States Army – for the better. Anyone who was affiliated with that task force should be justifiably proud of its work.

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