

THE DICHOTOMY OF LARGE-SCALE COMBAT OPERATIONS TARGETING FOR A COUNTERINSURGENCY EXPERIENCED FORCE

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Keeping pace with the speed of war means changing the way we approach challenges, build strategy, make decisions and develop leaders.

—Marine Corps General Joseph Dunford (Retired)

Introduction

The Army's training focus has shifted undeniably from counterinsurgency (COIN) operations to competition with pacing threats and readiness for large-scale combat operations. Most leaders of Army forces have significant COIN experience, which is invaluable; however, we must understand what the shift to large-scale combat operations means—specifically, for targeting. The typical COIN targeting practices in the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations (AOR) over the past decade, such as strike decisions held at the general officer level, created a requirement for a heightened degree of positive target identification. Because of this low-risk standard, there is likely to be little tolerance for collateral damage in large-scale combat operations. In general, the large-scale combat targeting mindset is distinguishable from COIN targeting by its increased speed of decision making and limited availability of information and intelligence, resulting in a greater assumption of risk. This article will refresh leaders on the targeting process and encourage them to implement organizational training on targeting processes for large-scale combat operations.

Perspectives on the Targeting Process

Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Campaigns and Operations*, defines targeting as “the process of selecting and prioritizing targets and matching the appropriate response to them, considering operational requirements and capabilities.”¹ Throughout COIN operations and the subsequent shift to readiness for large-scale combat operations, the Army's field artillery has advocated the Army targeting methodology of *decide, detect, deliver, and assess* to prioritize and engage enemy targets effectively.² This targeting process ensures

that commanders fully integrate and synchronize fires and effects to set conditions, meet key objective end states, and buy down risk for the commander in both COIN and large-scale combat scenarios.

In the decide phase, commanders and their staff plan and synchronize efforts to identify, select, and prioritize targets necessary to meet the commander's intent. The detect phase addresses information requirements through a full spectrum of collection activities that identify enemy activity, assets, and locations. The deliver phase occurs during the execution of operations. It involves engaging targets that meet the criteria of the commander's high-payoff target list, attack guidance matrix, and target selection standards. The final phase, assess, is continuous throughout the operations process and gauges not only the effectiveness of the delivery system but also the collection methods used, which feed back into the commander's decision-making process.

From an intelligence perspective, the joint targeting methodology known as *find, fix, finish, exploit, analyze, and disseminate* (F3EAD) remains doctrinally sound for both the COIN and large-scale combat operating environments.³ F3EAD is very well suited for targeting operations against high-value targets; however, it is equally effective against other types of combat operations targeting, including those seeking nonlethal effects. While doctrine views F3EAD as a hasty decision-making process, many units also use F3EAD during deliberate planning.

The find step establishes a starting point for intelligence collection. The fix step occurs when sufficient intelligence collection is accumulated on a target to execute a mission. These first two steps lay the foundation for successful operations against the adversary. Some examples of the finish step include lethal strikes via terminal guidance, launching a raid force, or using surrogates to close with and destroy

an adversary's forces, weapons, or equipment. The exploit step, as the main effort of F3EAD, is the most critical single step in the process, as it leads to finding, fixing, and finishing the next target and perpetuating the cycle. In the analyze step, intelligence analysts transform the collected exploitable material into intelligence reports, driving future operations. The last step of the F3EAD process is disseminate. Key to the success of the F3EAD process is creating a more comprehensive dissemination network than what the U.S. intelligence community traditionally practices.

When conducting a law of armed conflict (LOAC) targeting analysis, commanders, with the support of their staff, analyze military necessity, distinction, proportionality, and humanity. It is important to note that while the LOAC may permit certain actions, specific rules of engagement (ROE) implemented by a higher command are likely to restrict actions the LOAC permits. The decisions associated with the LOAC analysis rely heavily upon the information and intelligence provided to the staff. The quality of this information naturally feeds the accuracy and effectiveness of commanders' decisions. Accurate, timely, and reliable information used during the targeting analysis should result in targeting actions that comply with the LOAC principles and pertinent laws and regulations while simultaneously offering an acceptable level of risk to the commander.

The Counterinsurgency Experience

For the past two decades, most targeting analysis was conducted in an established operational environment in the CENTCOM AOR. Analysts within these areas of operation developed operating pictures and associated intelligence products that rotational units continually refined. Furthermore, the United States and its partner forces enjoyed significant asset superiority within these areas of operation. Consistent air superiority aided weapons delivery, intelligence gathering, redundant communications, and signal assets without

consequence for the collateral digital footprint. Most operational leaders within the Army today are veterans of these conflicts and have considerable experience from operating in this environment. This is invaluable experience; however, large-scale combat operations will rarely involve countless targeting scenarios comprising various unmanned aircraft systems and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets that identify, track, and remain on station to evaluate effects like those seen in the CENTCOM AOR. What then might targeting decision makers expect during large-scale combat operations? Before we discuss this shift, it is important to understand the lessons learned over the past two decades of conducting COIN operations.

Field Artillery Perspective. In developed operational environments and COIN environments, fire support is characterized by precision munitions, real-time situational awareness, and an emphasis on limited collateral damage. Air superiority within a developed operational environment allows friendly forces to enjoy freedom of maneuver, aerial platforms to deliver lethal and nonlethal effects, and capabilities that can serve as additional collection assets.

Precision guided munitions were in use as early as World War II but became common during the Vietnam conflict and the First Gulf War. COIN operations dominated the first two decades of the 21st century when precision munitions became a staple in the fire support arsenal. Precision munitions, such as the AGM-114 Hellfire Missile, are delivered by aerial assets. Ground systems, like the Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System, can fire several types of precision munitions over extended distances. Other precision munitions, such as the Tomahawk Cruise Missile, are launched from naval vessels. The qualifier of a precision-guided munition is its reliance on a guidance system using a global positioning system (GPS), laser, or internal inertial sensors to increase the weapon's accuracy. Precision-guided munitions were used heavily



An AGM-114B Hellfire missile being fired off the rails of a U.S. Navy SH-60 Seahawk helicopter toward a laser designated surface target during training off the coast of San Clemente Island, CA, on August 25, 1999. (DoD photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Spike Call, U.S. Navy.)

in COIN operations to increase lethality on specific targets while minimizing effects and potential collateral damage in the targets' vicinity. Precision munitions allow commanders to assume more risk when employing lethal effects in densely populated areas or near friendly forces.

In COIN operations, modern technology, such as airborne ISR and GPS tracking, allowed commanders to achieve near-complete situational awareness of both friendly and enemy forces. The benefit of air superiority permitted a battle staff to monitor, or "soak," a target for an extended period before striking or launching a raid force. Every Soldier, asset, or platform, from the ISR system orbiting at 20,000 feet to the team leader on the ground carrying an end-user device, served as a sensor, providing data to a joint operations center. This information was continually updated to enhance the battle staff's understanding of the threat and improve the commander's decision-making process. Commanders became accustomed to this elevated level of situational awareness and would become frustrated or risk-averse when the ability to track friendly or enemy forces was diminished. Battle staff became accustomed to the plethora of tactical ISR feeds and used what they saw on screens to confirm what units on the ground reported. In this COIN environment enhanced situational awareness was normal and therefore easily exploitable, but it cannot be expected in other environments.

COIN operations were also characterized by an emphasis on reducing collateral damage to both civilian life and infrastructure. Collateral damage estimates are used to determine the anticipated effects of weapons on a target or structure and the potential collateral effects of that weapon. The desire to minimize collateral damage has led to the development of low-collateral munitions and unique tools for estimating potential collateral damage. Often in the CENTCOM AOR, the "zero collateral damage" requirement limited engagement areas and time available to target. Commanders were responsible for minimizing civilian harm by understanding the risks associated with targeting specific areas.

Overall, fire support in developed operational environments requires a clear understanding of the environment and a reliance on technology to deliver precise effects on the enemy while minimizing the impact on non-combatants and civil structures.

Intelligence Perspective. In developed operational environments, intelligence operations require a blend of advanced technology, comprehensive databases, and highly trained personnel. These operations typically follow a systematic process to gather, analyze, and disseminate actionable intelligence, thereby supporting informed military decision making. Execution of intelligence operations in developed operational environments occurs as follows:

Collection. Intelligence collection relies heavily on sophisticated technology, including satellites, drones, and surveillance aircraft. These assets provide a wide range of data, including imagery, signals, and electronic communications, enabling operators to monitor enemy activities, assess threats, and identify vulnerabilities. Additionally, human intelligence sources play a crucial role in gathering information from within threat organizations and local populations. This method of collection relies heavily on all-domain superiority.

Analysis. Intelligence, once collected, is analyzed by skilled personnel trained in various disciplines and capabilities, including imagery analysis, signals intelligence, cyberspace intelligence, and open-source intelligence. Analysts assess the information's relevance, reliability, and significance to generate accurate assessments of enemy capabilities, intentions, and vulnerabilities. Advanced analytical tools and software facilitate the processing of large volumes of data, enabling the identification of patterns and trends that may indicate emerging threats or opportunities.

Integration. Analyzed intelligence is integrated into comprehensive assessments and briefings for military commanders and policymakers. This process involves synthesizing information from multiple sources and disciplines to provide a clear understanding of the operational environment, threat behavior, and potential courses of action. Intelligence fusion centers play a crucial role in integrating intelligence from various sources and agencies to provide a comprehensive picture for decision makers.

Dissemination. Once analyzed and integrated, intelligence is disseminated using secure communication channels to relevant stakeholders, including commanders, operational units, intelligence agencies, allied partners, and government agencies involved in national security. The timely and accurate dissemination of intelligence ensures that decision makers have the information they need to plan and execute military operations effectively.

Feedback. Intelligence operations in developed operational environments emphasize the use of continuous feedback loops to evaluate the effectiveness of collection and analysis efforts. Lessons learned from previous operations are incorporated into training, doctrine, and technological advancements to enhance future intelligence capabilities. This iterative process ensures that intelligence operations remain responsive and adaptive to evolving threats and challenges.

Overall, intelligence operations in developed operational environments utilize advanced technology, analytical expertise, and institutional collaboration to provide decision makers with timely, accurate, and actionable intelligence for achieving military objectives.

The High Mobility Artillery Rocket System fires the Army's Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System (U.S. Army photo)



Legal Perspective. During COIN operations, the legal role in the targeting process must remain consistent and transparent. Legal experts determine whether commanders and staff adhere to the principles of LOAC (and any additional theater policies and guidance). However, this process depends heavily on the availability of information and intelligence concerning the targets provided to the staff. In a developed operational environment where units leverage assets and technological superiority (as was typical with CENTCOM COIN operations), timely and accurate reports greatly assist in the LOAC determination. Timely, accurate, and actionable intelligence makes deciding target distinction, proportionality, and humanity implications significantly more feasible. It allows decision makers to observe targets, make assessments, and gauge effects in real time. Ultimately, risk lies with the commander making the targeting decisions; however, the availability of assets in a developed operational environment, where allied forces enjoy superiority in multiple domains, typically reduces risk.

Adapting to Large-Scale Combat Operations

As we shift focus to competition with pacing threats and prepare our forces for potential large-scale combat operations, our targeting analysis mindset must also shift. Unlike the COIN operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, large-scale combat operations will require conducting the targeting process in a rapidly evolving operational environment where we lack asset superiority and redundancy and must sometimes make decisions informed by inadequate information. Targeting analysis will be conducted more quickly, with less available information and intelligence, causing a greater assumption of risk.

Despite the faster pace and the limited availability of targeting information associated with large-scale combat operations, leaders can promote successful targeting by recognizing

the difference between operation-specific ROE and LOAC, simplifying triggers, and understanding the value of targets.⁴

Rules of Engagement Versus Law of Armed Conflict. As we teach and train, we must clearly distinguish between operation-specific ROE and LOAC. The differences can be subtle and difficult to discern. During the Iraq and Afghanistan COIN operations, Soldiers on separate deployments often operated under similar, but different, operation-specific ROE. However, it is vital to understand that, in the absence of additional theater- or mission-specific ROE, the LOAC sets a relatively low bar for decision makers. Future large-scale combat operations will undoubtedly include mission-specific ROE, wherein operational guidance regarding military necessity, distinction, proportionality, and humanity analysis remains distinct from LOAC. Put simply, the LOAC is the law that sets boundaries for permitted and prohibited actions; ROE are conflict-specific policies that the President, Secretary of Defense, or higher command imposes to restrict further the actions of subordinate forces that the law otherwise permits. The operations cell (G-3/S-3) controls and briefs mission-specific ROE, while the judge advocates from the servicing legal office advise commanders on the application of the LOAC.

Simplify Triggers. In a faster-paced environment with less available information and intelligence, we must be willing to simplify triggers in the targeting process. For example, during intelligence preparation of the operational environment, an organization may determine that the movement of an enemy battalion tactical group will be signaled by their reconnaissance element, composed of multiple BRDM-2 reconnaissance patrol vehicles, moving into a specific named area of interest (NAI 1). Ideally, if there is an interest in targeting the reconnaissance element, one trigger could be a friendly

observation asset identifying the presence of BRDM-2s in NAI 1. However, if the situation offers limited information and intelligence, can the targeting trigger be simply *movement* observed in NAI 1? This second, less specific trigger carries a greater risk. In a large-scale combat operations environment, these are concepts that leaders must understand as viable circumstance-driven options.

Understanding a Target's Value. During large-scale combat operations, the value of targets must be understood in real time. Several tools are available to assist organizations with this task, including the high-payoff target list and the attack guidance matrix. Organizations must recognize that in large-scale combat operations, factors beyond legal considerations may restrict their ability to engage a target—for example, controlled supply rates and the risk of the enemy developing countermeasures for their targeting assets.⁵ These concepts are generally understood but must be emphasized when planning and developing attack guidance matrices and during targeting decisions.

The Field Artillery Perspective. In a developing operational environment, the approach to fire support differs from the approach used in the COIN environment. Large-scale combat operations present challenges that a COIN-experienced force must adapt to meet. Fortunately, the tools to succeed are already available.

In a large-scale combat environment, will there be a single source targeting solution? The speed of warfare, combined with the massing of forces, requires the layering and synchronization of multidomain effects, not only to defeat enemy protection but also to present overwhelming dilemmas for the enemy commander. Effective targeting will include layering lethal effects and integrating electromagnetic warfare, cyberspace, and space-based assets and capabilities. This requires battle staff to understand and integrate joint capabilities that were not used extensively in COIN operations. Additionally, successful multidomain integration requires close coordination and interoperability with the joint force and foreign partners. Detailed planning, shared intelligence, and synchronized execution (maximizing effects to achieve overmatch while preserving capability) are key to success.

In an underdeveloped operational environment, however, mission command may be challenging as commanders will not enjoy the same level of situational awareness that was normal in the COIN environment. The lack of air superiority and the enemy's ability to detect signal emissions may limit a commander's ability to receive continuous communication and real-time updates. Coordination and synchronization become progressively more challenging when communication is limited, GPS is denied, and electromagnetic and cyberspace warfare proliferate over vast geographical areas. Protection against collection and cyberspace access, as

well as a disciplined communications plan, are essential for survivability. Commanders must become comfortable with providing guidance and then allowing subordinate units to execute their missions with limited oversight, as they will be forced to assume more risk with less situational awareness of their subordinate elements. Operators of delivery systems, such as cannon and rocket artillery, as well as air assets, must understand their targets and utilize speed and flexibility to achieve survivability and mass fires on the enemy.

Units must adjust to the complex nature of large-scale combat operations. Understanding capabilities, integrating available assets, and robust planning will help commanders manage risk effectively. Additionally, utilizing resources available throughout the joint force will empower initiative and creativity in challenging environments.

The Intelligence Perspective. In underdeveloped operational environments lacking all-domain superiority and with limited communications infrastructure, intelligence operations face unique challenges from an often sparse population, rugged terrain, cultural complexities, and limited infrastructure. Nevertheless, intelligence operations can be conducted effectively in underdeveloped operational environments using traditional methods adapted to local conditions and by leveraging available resources.

Human intelligence becomes a primary method of intelligence collection because of a lack of advanced technological resources. Collectors build relationships with local communities, tribal leaders, and informants to gather information on enemy activities, regional dynamics, and potential threats. This often involves conducting covert meetings, cultivating sources, and developing trust within the community.

Intelligence operations in underdeveloped operational environments prioritize cultural understanding and sensitivity. Collectors must navigate complex social structures, tribal affiliations, and ethnic tensions to gather accurate information and avoid misunderstandings that could escalate tensions or lead to conflicts. Cultural experts and linguists often embed with intelligence teams to facilitate communication and interpretation of intelligence. This requires flexibility and adaptation to local conditions. Collectors frequently employ unconventional methods, such as blending in with the local population, utilizing indigenous assets, or employing indigenous tracking and survival skills. This adaptive approach allows intelligence teams to gather information effectively while minimizing their footprint and avoiding detection by adversaries.

Given the rugged terrain and limited infrastructure, small-unit reconnaissance becomes essential for gathering tactical intelligence. Specialized reconnaissance teams conduct patrols, set up observation posts, and execute reconnaissance missions to gather firsthand information on enemy movements, terrain features, and potential threats.

In situations where advanced technology is unavailable, intelligence operations must rely on basic communication equipment, such as radios or encrypted messaging systems to maintain effective communication. Satellite imagery and drones may still be used where available, but their use is often limited by terrain and logistical constraints.

Intelligence operations in underdeveloped operational environments often involve collaboration with local security forces, militias, or rebel groups. By partnering with indigenous forces, intelligence operators gain access to local knowledge, resources, and networks, enhancing their understanding of the operational environment and increasing their effectiveness in gathering intelligence.

The Legal Perspective. During large-scale combat operations, commanders at all levels will likely assume a higher level of risk in their decision making, especially when targeting. The *Department of Defense Law of War Manual* notes that decision makers must view the battlespace through the “fog of war,” which renders information both limited and unreliable. “The uncertainty of information in war results from the chaotic nature of combat and from the opposing sides’ efforts to deceive one another, which generally is not prohibited by the law of war.”⁶ Because the targeting process depends on the information and intelligence available to the staff, an underdeveloped operational environment lacking asset superiority and established technology will create challenges for obtaining intelligence reports used in the targeting process. The quantity, fidelity, and timeliness of these reports directly affect the LOAC analysis and determination. Nevertheless, to conform to the law of war, commanders’ decisions must be guided by certain principles.

Military Necessity. This principle recognizes the commander’s need to defeat the enemy quickly and efficiently, justifying all measures taken toward that end, as long as the actions do not violate the laws of war.⁷ Effective large-scale combat operations require rapid decision making; however, there is considerable risk to decision making during the targeting process when speed is combined with a limited availability of information and intelligence. Commanders must understand that they will only be judged on the information they had at the time of their actions, and whether their decisions were objectively reasonable given the facts and circumstances at that time. This concept is commonly referred to as the Rendulic Rule.⁸

Distinction. The principle of distinction requires that “parties to a conflict shall at all times distinguish between the civilian population and combatants and between civilian objects and military objectives and accordingly shall direct their operations only against military objectives.”⁹ This task may be difficult in a large-scale combat environment due to limited sensors and intelligence and communications assets. Those

who plan or decide upon an attack are required to “do everything *feasible* to verify that the objectives to be attacked are neither civilians nor civilian objects and are not subject to special protection but are military objectives.”¹⁰ The key term here is *feasible*; what is or is not *feasible* is clearly situation dependent. In an underdeveloped operational environment with a rapidly shifting landscape, the feasibility of attaining redundant targeting information differs significantly from that of gathering information in a developed operational environment with multiple ISR assets available to provide information on a potential target.

Proportionality. The principle of proportionality directs commanders to “refrain from attacks in which the expected loss of civilian life, injury to civilians, and damage to civilian objects incidental to the attack would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage expected to be gained;” along with the duty to take feasible precautions to limit collateral damage.¹¹ Furthermore, “the commander’s decisions on proportionality must be reasonable. . . . The commander must be able to explain the expected military importance of the target and why the anticipated civilian collateral injury or damage is not expected to be excessive.”¹² However, the *Department of Defense Law of War Manual* notes that deference should be granted to commanders during assessments regarding whether they have complied with the principle of proportionality, and any judgment of compliance with legal requirements must be based on the information available to the commander at the time.¹³

Humanity. The principle of humanity in the *Law of War* prohibits using methods of warfare that cause unnecessary suffering or superfluous injury.¹⁴ This refers to harm that goes beyond what is necessary to disable a combatant. This concept often involves the means and methods used to achieve desired effects. Commanders should understand that, regardless of military necessity, suffering inflicted may be considered unnecessary if it is deemed inhuman or barbaric by constructs outlined in International Humanitarian Law (e.g., the Hague Conventions).


Evaluating and determining compliance with the LOAC is complicated, and it can involve a significant assumption of risk. During large-scale combat operations, decision makers in the targeting process will be required to act with limited information on an accelerated timeline. Personnel involved in the decision-making process should do what is feasible, make good-faith decisions, be prepared to explain their reasoning if prompted, and remember that their actions will be evaluated based only on information that was visible through the fog of war.

Conclusion

Targeting operations vary significantly between developed and underdeveloped operational environments because of

differences in infrastructure, technology, and the nature of conflicts. In developed operational environments, such as modern urban environments or advanced industrialized nations, operations benefit from robust communication networks, sophisticated surveillance systems, and access to comprehensive databases. The intelligence warfighting function is integral to the targeting process. In developed operational environments, military intelligence relies heavily on advanced technology, including satellite imagery, drones, electronic surveillance, and cyberspace operations. These resources provide real-time data, enabling commanders to monitor enemy movements, assess threats, and make informed decisions quickly. Additionally, developed operational environments often have well-established intelligence agencies with experienced personnel trained in sophisticated analysis techniques.

In contrast, underdeveloped operational environments, such as remote or rural regions, offer significant challenges to targeting operations. A lack of advanced technological resources often means decision makers must rely on more traditional intelligence-gathering methods associated with targeting, such as human intelligence and signals intelligence. In these environments, intelligence gathering often relies on leveraging available assets to gather information on enemy activities, while tempering expectations due to the conditions associated with large-scale combat operations.

While targeting operations share common principles across all operational environments and conflict types, the varying conditions and challenges between developed and underdeveloped environments necessitate adaptable strategies and approaches for gathering, analyzing, and utilizing available intelligence effectively in support of the targeting process. For a profession tasked with fighting and winning our Nation's wars, the reality of making rapid decisions based on limited information in large-scale combat operations is both risky and necessary. Consider, though, this comparison: the medical profession pledges to prescribe only beneficial treatments, according to their abilities and judgment, and to refrain from causing harm or hurt.¹⁵ However, each year in the United States alone, 251,000 people are lost to medical malpractice.¹⁶ These deaths are the collateral consequences of lifesaving medical treatment that many patients often need and a risk that most patients willingly absorb. Perhaps our expectations regarding the reality of warfare and large-scale combat operations have been skewed in the nearly 80 years since our world experienced such a global conflict.¹⁷ 

Epigraph

Jim Garamone, "Dunford: Speed of Military Decision-Making Must Exceed Speed of War," News, U.S. Department of Defense, January 31, 2017, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/1066045/dunford-speed-of-military-decision-making-must-exceed-speed-of-war/>.

Endnotes

1. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Campaigns and Operations* (Joint Staff, 2022), III-31.
2. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-60, *Army Targeting* (Government Publishing Office, 2023), 2-1.
3. Department of the Army, FM 3-60, *Army Targeting*, I-1.
4. Major General David Gardner (Commanding General, Joint Readiness Training Center and Fort Johnson [Polk]), in telephone interview with author(s), April 23, 2024. The priorities discussed here are informed by MG Gardner's experience as the Commander, Operations Group and as Commander, Joint Readiness Training Center.
5. Colonel Matthew Hardman (Commander, Operations Group, Joint Readiness Training Center), in telephone interview with author(s), April 25, 2024.
6. Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Law of War Manual* (Office of General Counsel, 2015), 17, <https://media.defense.gov/2023/Jul/31/2003271432/-1/-1/0/DOD-LAW-OF-WAR-MANUAL-JUNE-2015-UPDATED-JULY%202023.PDF>. Change 1 was issued on December 13, 2016. Change 2 was issued on July 31, 2023.
7. *Ibid.*, 52.
8. The United Nations War Crimes Commission, *Law Reports of Trials of War Criminals, Volume VIII* (His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1949), 68-69, https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/ll/llmlp/Law-Reports_Vol-8/Law-Reports_Vol-8.pdf. For context, this "rule" was generated based on the prosecution of German General Lothar Rendulic, who conducted a scorched-earth retreat under the false belief that Soviet forces were pursuing him. "There is evidence in the record that there was no military necessity for this destruction and devastation. An examination of the facts in retrospect can well sustain this conclusion. But we are obliged to judge the situation as it appeared to the defendant at the time. If the facts were such as would justify the action by the exercise of judgment, after giving consideration to all the factors and existing possibilities, even though the conclusion reached may have been faulty, it cannot be said to be criminal."
9. International Committee of the Red Cross Database, Treaties, States Parties and Commentaries, Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977, Article 48 - Basic rule, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/api-1977/article-48>.
10. International Committee of the Red Cross Database, Treaties, States Parties and Commentaries, Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 8 June 1977, Article 57 - Precautions in attack, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/api-1977/article-57>. (emphasis mine).
11. Department of Defense, *Law of War*, 268.
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13. *Ibid.*, 254.
14. *Ibid.*, 367.
15. Robert H. Shmerling, "First, do no harm," Harvard Health Blog, Harvard Health Publishing, June 22, 2020, <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/first-do-no-harm-201510138421>.
16. James G. Anderson and Kathleen Abrahamson, "Your Health Care May Kill You: Medical Errors," *Studies in Health Technology and Informatics* 234, (2017):13-17, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28186008/>.

17. Hardman, telephone interview. A point of discussion between Colonel Hardman and the authors was the cognitive dissonance associated with war and its impact on the targeting process. Although every life matters, that fact must be balanced against the desire to do the greatest good for the greatest number of people. How that dichotomy factors into the targeting process for decision makers at all levels, and to what end, is a reasonable consideration to associate with warfare, in contrast to the unnecessary consequences associated with the work of other professions (e.g., the medical profession, as referenced in the previous endnote).

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