A REBUTTAL TO "ATOMIC ATTRACTION"
Schulze, R C
Marine Corps Gazette (pre-1994); May 1957; 41, 5;
Marine Corps Gazette & Leatherneck Magazine of the Marines
pg. 62

A REBUTTAL TO "ATOMIC ATTRACTION"

SAN DIEGO, CALIF. — Col R. E. Cushman's prize-winning essay entitled *Tactics of the Atomic Age, A Study in Principles* was extremely interesting and certainly stimulating. He developed a subject which we all should be constantly considering because, as the Colonel intimates, there is grave danger in restricting our planning for the war of the "near future" to the use of conventional tactics while we separately plan atomic age tactics for the "distant war" of "guided missiles, huge helicopters and push buttons." I certainly agree that we must base our contemporary planning on the premise that the atomic age battlefield is here *now,* and that tactics must not be the "old tactics found in the FMs — the old 2 up and one back of fond memory." As the atomic age battlefield is here *now,* so we must develop new tactics *now.*

I was intrigued by the Colonel's thoughts as were, I am sure, all other readers. The interest created by any essay is the best evaluator of its worth, and so as I write this I assume the role not of a critic but as a supporter of most of the original essay. In doing so I hope to encourage more thoughts on this immediate problem.

The Colonel states in his article that in any future war the threat of the use of atomic weapons by the enemy will always be with us and for this reason the tactics used must be basically the same whether the use of atomic weapons is an actuality or only a threat. He goes on to say, "who can tell when threat would become actuality?" . . . "What commander would dare take the awful risk of conventional concentrations on the mere gamble that the other side would not break the stalemate by a surprise atomic attack? To do so would be the grossest violation imaginable of the old rule that we never try to guess the enemy's intentions — we always operate with respect to his capabilities."

Later, when discussing the nature of the conflict and risks taken, the author states that the enemy determines the risks we can take, and that, "if we take risks beyond those he takes—look out!"

Again, in discussing atomic stalemate, the Colonel writes that, "it (atomic stalemate) becomes more precarious as one side starts to lose. Whereas at the start each side believes he can achieve victory without atomic attack; later, a desperate loser may not hesitate to use these weapons as a last resort, hoping by their surprise employment to tip the scales at a critical point in the struggle."

In developing the "future battlefield," the Colonel states that, "We must never forget that a battlefield is an arena where two opponents meet, and the conflict which ensues is the composite result of . . . their two diametrically opposed wills, the interplay of two types of tactics and the relative status of certain intangibles such as esprit. To develop tactics outside of this context is dangerous since lives and victory will be at stake."

I agree wholeheartedly with the author to this point, but I think that the following theory, that of "atomic attraction" is extremely dangerous and contradicts all of the sound assertions made by the author. The Colonel explains the theory of "atomic attraction" thusly:

"I think that on the atomic battlefield there will exist an irresistible attraction between large opposing forces. These formations will have an attracting force between them which I call 'atomic attraction.' This force will be entirely attributable to the fact that in close combat between major units will lie the principal assurance of safety from hostile use of atomic weapons. These weapons are so lethal that both forces would necessarily be destroyed by a blast directed at either one, if the forces are closely engaged. Therefore, the moment enemy forces are located we will be forced to order a rapid and almost total concentration of all forces within reach of the hostile formation. This is needed to accomplish a mission of destruction of the enemy and to achieve security from enemy atomic employment. Both objectives can be achieved by the very *same action* — 2 *birds with one stone.*"

We all know that the Communist bloc controls the preponderance of the earth's manpower. We also are aware of the fact that in any future war Russia plus satellites would vastly outnumber us in men under arms. We recall clearly that both Russia and her "fellow traveler," China, have demonstrated complete disregard to huge numerical losses in WW II and Korea. They both have in the past and undoubtedly will continue to exploit the principle of mass in their tactics. Manpower is their forte, so why shouldn't they? They can afford to use fantastic numbers to win a battle or gain a victory. We, however, cannot afford such a luxury — neither physically nor morally. We have and will undoubtedly continue to rely on a preponderance of firepower as the basis for our tactics.

With this in mind, could we afford to take the awful risk which would be inherent to us in the theory of "atomic attraction"? The assurance "of safety from hostile use of atomic weapons" would, I am afraid, work only to our enemy's favor. The Communists would experience little reticence, I believe, in dropping high yield nuclear weapons over large forces of their own closely engaged with similar sized enemy forces if they could be assured of equal losses in enemy units. It would be as simple as playing checkers when you have nine kings and your opponent has only three.

We cannot afford to indulge in the theory of "atomic attraction" even in a war where the use of atomic weapons is only a threat because in the Colonel's words, "a desperate loser may not hesitate to use these weapons as a last resort, hoping by their surprise employment to tip the scales at a critical point in the struggle." At this point I will even go so far out on the familiar limb as to say that we should strike the word *mass* from our tactical dictionary and supplant it with the hackneyed phrase "atomic weapons." We can never play in the same league with the Communists using conventional mass tactics. When they use their conventional masses we will have to use our equalizer — the atomic weapon. It is our only counter to their masses, but it is a good one.

The way I see the battlefield of the future it would still be the interplay of two types of tactics, but we would not attempt to meet the enemy's conventional masses with like masses. Our key words would be "separation," "flexibility" and "distribution." Always moving, never offering a good atomic target, our units would advance with plenty of separation or even, yes, as a thin but

powerful line. Minor opposition would be overcome with our superior conventional firepower. Enemy massings or strong points would be dealt with swiftly by atomic weapons. I do not believe that this type of battlefield is dependent on "a world of guided missiles, huge helicopters, and push buttons." We possess now the most important prerequisites. We have small arms and light supporting weapons fire superiority, air superiority, leaders with plenty of initiative, and highly trained, hardened troops that could be adequately supported by helicopters now.

Capt R. C. Schulze

BRAIN-TEASE PROBLEMS

EL TORO, CALIF. — The Marine Corps is manned by highly trained specialists, whose versatility and know-how should generate a flood of worthwhile ideas. Let's assist in stirring up these "breeding furnaces" of ideas and get them, in the "atomic sense," reacting. We have to insert our problems into the furnace to get them breeding. Break them down to specific problems before insertion in the furnace.

Inventing or idea creating is a form of endeavor arising primarily from the urge for creative work and self expression present in almost every normal individual. Improvements over known devices, tactics, or techniques, as distinguished from the basics or originals, appear to originate most often with men who know their fields of activity and build new ideas and devices based upon their experience.

The old cliche, "There is no indispensable man," is not appropriate in today's Marine Corps. For as our weapons and planes have come to be a complex system of people, who are not only trained in land, sea and air fighting, but all manner of technical specialties, the need for a dedicated Corps of professional Marines has never been greater. The incentives offered by private industry should not be incomparable to the recognition a nation gives to young people who make a career of military service. The important task is to recognize the importance of the man and encourage him to put forth his stored up unused knowledge.

Typically, ideas are kicked around at the lower echelon stage and then forgotten, as there is a reluctance in military men to do unsolicited paper work, and then impose it upon the next senior in command. This is a regrettable fact in light of the remarkable benefits and savings derived from the government's Beneficial Suggestion Program. But a solid pat-on-the-back at meritorious mast and the in-the-service-record entries have considerable compensatory worth and a more understandable answer stems from problems just cited.

It is a known fact that chance inspirations enter into the conception of many ideas that develop into outstandingly successful military and commercial products or techniques. Even in serious scientific and commercial research, it is chance, in a high proportion of cases, that leads to final success, but it is to be observed that chance works in favor of those who are exposed most often to its occurrence.

Our basic responsibility is to train, improve our equipment, techniques, and above all be ready in all phases whenever or wherever we are needed. What better way than to let everyone have a hand in this accomplishment? The specific problems will become more familiar and have a better chance of improvement.

Now after we have inserted our specific problems into the breeding furnaces, let's irritate them by "Brain Teasing." The machinery for instituting such a program has already been established by CMC in the establishment of the Marine Corps Development Center. The center has assigned a liaison officer with each Fleet Marine Force. These representatives maintain direct liaison with both the major air and ground units of the Force to which they are assigned. They provide the means for prompt and ready exchange of development ideas and information between the center and field units. Let's go one step further and add a representative to each of our divisions and air wings. These representatives will disseminate, collect and make preliminary reviews of the "Brain Teaser Form" and forward them to the Force Development Center representative who will review and forward to the Marine Corps Development Center.

The Brain Teaser form will be made up for each series of specific problems, i.e., beach landings, helicopter landing zone selections, mechanical improvements of devices, etc. After the Brain Teaser forms have been composed for a series, the specific problems as they arise will be added, stating its present accomplishments and what further is desired in accomplishments of this specific method. The forms will then be disseminated to the field.

BRAIN TEASER FORM

Specific Problem: To improve the method for selecting a helicopter landing zone in an unfamiliar enemy-held area.

Method Now Used: Maps and interpretation of aerial photos.

Brain Teasers: For a method or technique.

Is there a way to get similar results without using current methods?
Can a similar result be obtained without doing the job at all?
Is there an easier way to do it?
Is there a quicker way to do it?
Is there a surer way to do it?
In what other way can it be made more effective?
Is there a cheaper way to do it?
Can a combination with other devices be evolved?
What other way can it be improved?

Can the order be changed?

Arrangement	Precedence

Can the time element be changed?

Faster	Slower
Longer	Shorter
Chronologized	Perpetuated
Synchronized	Anticipated
Renewed	Recurrence
Altered	

Can the cause be changed?

Stimulated	Strengthened
Altered	Destroyed
Influenced	

Can the motion be changed?

Stilled	Speeded
Slowed	Directed
Deviated	Repelled
Barred	Lifted

After the brain teaser forms have been disseminated along with instructions as to exactly what we are trying to improve in each specific case, our breeding furnaces should, after establishing clearly in their minds the problem at hand, and going down the list of brain teasers start reacting. Producing satisfactory result in a high percentage of cases. To further help this along open discussions could be held which will help crystalize their thoughts into a workable solution.

To encourage our people to participate more freely in such a program, let's offer them something concrete. Under the present system it is not possible to grant direct monetary awards, but we can grant them indirectly. When a man comes up with a solution to one of our problems, his promotion composite score can be raised on a graduated scale according to the complexity or value of the problem solved. In addition he can be presented a certificate of merit at meritorious mast with a copy going in his SRB.

This same procedure can be used for officers and Staff NCOs, where a composite score for promotion is not used. A graduated scale of points can be used to advance them up the ladder in a promotion zone or decrease their waiting period in time in grade.

Let's face facts, everyone needs an incentive to produce to his utmost.

MSgt E. Ellis